

**Assistance Secretary-General Kyung-wha Kang**

**Remarks at ECOSOC Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the  
Post-WHS Landscape: Taking the Gender Commitments Forward**

*New York, 27 June 2016*

*As delivered*

Excellencies, distinguished guests, panellists, ladies and gentlemen,

I thank Minister Lillianne Ploumen of the Netherlands and Ambassador Per Orneus, of Sweden for joining us in this event, which looks at integrating gender squarely into humanitarian action. I would also like to recognize the co-organizers of this event along with OCHA, UNFPA and UN Women and all of the organizations represented by the IASC Gender Reference Group.

It is now a little over one month since the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, and there we saw 173 member states, and 9,000 participants from humanitarian organizations, civil society and the private sector committed to improving the lives of the world's most vulnerable people. At the Summit, gender equality, women's empowerment, women's rights and protection were acknowledged as central to transforming humanitarian action.

Indeed at the Summit, world leaders made over 3,000 individual and collective commitments on how to deliver on the Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity. Since then, OCHA as Secretariat has endeavoured to compile, confirm and categorize these commitments and to provide an initial overview of these commitments and the areas they cover. This work is ongoing, we very much hope to finalize this as soon as possible, but unfortunately we did not do this in time for ECOSOC, which was very much our aim.

But that is an indication of the sheer quantity and the diversity of the commitments that we are now trying to come to grips with. Of particular note, a large number of commitments from a broad range of stakeholders were made to strengthen national and local capacity to prevent and respond to crises. There was almost unanimous support for humanitarian action to be grounded in the principles of gender equality, women's empowerment, and women's rights.

OCHA will be compiling, analysing and publishing these commitments on an online commitments platform which will be accessible to all humanitarian stakeholders. The platform is where commitments can be further made but also tracked and monitored. The real work is turning these many commitments and pledges into concrete actions that will bring about meaningful changes in individual people's lives.

At the Summit, leaders at the high-level round table on Women and Girls, demonstrated their collective commitment to elevate gender equality and the participation of women as a central humanitarian norm. Concrete commitments were announced aimed at overcoming structural inequalities and barriers that hinder the realization of women's rights and gender equality. For example, programmes that enable adolescent girls to stay in school and escape gender based-violence were launched and donors pledged to increase funding for gender equality and women's empowerment in emergencies.

Leaders also pledged to form partnerships with women's groups to increase their participation in decision-making; while humanitarian organizations committed to move towards gender parity in humanitarian staffing.

These commitments further reinforced existing policies and frameworks, including the Security Council's Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, the Every Woman Every Child Every Where Movement of the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health and the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies. However what was new was a deep recognition across board that it is only through robust, joint efforts backed by sufficient financial resources that humanitarian action would finally work for and with women and girls.

Let me give you some of the examples of the specific commitments that leaders made, just to give you a flavour of the over 500 financial, policy and operational promises that were put forward at the Summit in support of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Government of Canada pledged US\$3 million to address sexual violence, the United States announced US\$12.5 million to prevent and respond to gender based violence, while the NGO Care International committed to triple its current amount of funding it provides to women's groups.

The United Kingdom pledged to increase funding for psychosocial and sexual and reproductive health services. Japan committed to support the capacity-building of approximately 5,000 women working on maternal and child health and disaster risk reduction. And Denmark committed to increase funding allocated for sexual and reproductive health care services to those affected by the crisis in Syria.

Australia committed to providing financial support to local women's groups, with a focus on increasing women's leadership and participation, including through the Global Acceleration Instrument on Women Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action.

The African Union committed to increase women and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health and rights through an annual reporting to be undertaken at the level of

Heads of State as well as continental monitoring tools such as the gender scorecard and annual reporting on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325. Madagascar committed to facilitate access to family planning, improve awareness of HIV/ AIDS and safe motherhood, as well as to eradicate child marriage, and combat early pregnancy.

The Netherlands committed to ensure that aid workers were better trained on gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian action. Spain and Australia both committed to apply a gender marker in all humanitarian funding decisions. And the World Bank committed to empowering young women and adolescent girls through education.

At OCHA, we are aligning our work to the commitments made through a new Policy Instruction on Gender Equality and a planned corporate action plan that will be instrumental in guiding the internal planning and programming.

We are currently identifying the right mechanisms to take all of this work forward – mechanisms that will continue to reflect the multi-stakeholder nature of the Summit process. For example, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and its subsidiary bodies - especially the Gender in Humanitarian Action Reference Group, and the IASC Gender Standby Capacity Project, are reviewing their policies and activities to align with these core commitments to underscore system-wide progress.

In the immediate next steps, OCHA will issue a document summarizing each of the commitments under the five core responsibilities in July 2016, while an online commitments platform will also be launched, which will be accessible to all to add to and monitor the commitments made. In September, the Secretary-General will report to the General Assembly on the Summit's achievements and will also propose ways to take the commitments forward, including through existing intergovernmental and inter-agency avenues.

We must continue to build on the momentum generated at the Summit when it comes to delivering on gender equality and women's empowerment. I very much look forward to the panel discussion and to the recommendations that will come out of it, on the strategies, mechanisms and tools that can be used to turn these commitments into meaningful and lasting change on the ground.

Thank you very much.