CONCEPT NOTE

Gender-Based Violence, Girls’ and Women’s Rights in the Central Sahel

Virtual Side Event on the Central Sahel, 16 October 2020 | 3:30pm-5:00pm CEST

Register in advance for the virtual event on Zoom and receive your access link to join.

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a critical health, protection, power and life-threatening issue in the Sahel crisis. Conflict and displacement are driving escalating levels of sexual violence, intimate partner violence, child marriage, exploitation and abuse towards girls and women in the Sahel.

Before COVID-19, at least 10% of girls aged 15-19 in Mali had experienced acts of sexual violence, 34% experienced physical violence and 86% of women and girls had undergone female genital mutilation. 76% of girls in Niger and 51% of them in Burkina Faso married before the age of 18. All these situations are amplified by multiple crises, and COVID-19 which led to the breakdown of family, social and legal networks, as well as the collapse of essential GBV support care services.

Even though needs are rising, prevention, risk mitigation and response to GBV, gender equality and the rights of girls and women are insufficiently prioritized in the Central Sahel. Girls and women in the Sahel deserve to be heard and included in decision-making structures when the future of their own region is on the agenda. Protection from GBV is not yet central to humanitarian response efforts and stronger collaboration is required across the triple nexus. Action to prevent violence from taking place, mitigating risk and ensuring access to life saving response for survivors - require collective and reinforced action, to save lives, for the SDGs to become reality, and stabilisation efforts to be meaningful.

In the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plans for Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, not more than 3% of the financial requirements address GBV. The GBV sub-cluster in Burkina Faso estimates that only 12% of affected areas offer specialized services to GBV survivors. Despite scarce resources, there are promising practices in GBV prevention, response and GBV risk mitigation. In Niger, children and adolescents have improved access to GBV services thanks to the multi-partner “Child and Adolescents Survivor Initiative”. In Mali state-run one-stop centers that provide multi-sectoral care for survivors are scaling-up. Burkina Faso has put in place its first GBV coordination structure this year.

The Call to Action for the Protection from GBV in Emergencies (CtA) is a groundbreaking global initiative and its 86 members, spanning donor states, International Organisations and NGOs, present at the High-Level Conference for the Central Sahel, provide a framework for us to enhance collective efforts to eliminate GBV. The new Roadmap 2021-2025 was launched on the 25th September 2020 at the 75th United Nations General Assembly.
SIDE EVENT: Gender Based Violence and Girls’ Rights in the Central Sahel

The event provides participants and officials with recommendations from Sahelian girls and community-based groups providing GBV services, working with girls’ and women’s rights in the Sahel to guide the Call to Action for the protection from GBV in emergency and more precisely to strengthen the prevention, risk mitigation and response to GBV within the humanitarian response in the Central Sahel and across the triple nexus. Ministers, donors and authorities are invited to respond to the gender based violence crisis in the Sahel.

The objective of the event are to:

- Amplify the voices and priorities of girls from the Sahel and provide participants a unique opportunity to learn from first-hand experience and recommendations from the affected girls.
- Draw attention to the critical challenges to preventing and responding to GBV in the Sahel and advocate for global solidarity around girls’ and women’s rights and the fight against gender-based violence.
- Government actors commit to strengthen the prevention, risk and response to GBV within the humanitarian response within the Central Sahel response, ensuring the rights of women and girls are central to humanitarian action and across the triple nexus.

SPEAKERS

- Ms. Mette Thygesen, Head of Department, Humanitarian Actions, Civil Society, and Engagement, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark
- Sahelian Girls: Nene from Mali, Sandra from Burkina Faso, Yasmina from Niger
- Ms. Kaimaram Madou Gadjji, Representative from Mata Masu Dubara (MMD) de Mainé, Niger
- Ms. Mariam Kouyate, Representative from Association “Jigiya”Hope of Women Group, Mali
- Ms. Marie Laurence Ilboudo Marchal, Ministry of Woman, National Solidarity, Family and Social Action - Burkina Faso
- Mme Bintou Founé SAMAKE, Minister for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family – Mali
- Ms. Andrea Koulaimah, Director, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and Pacific, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), European Union (TBC)
- ECOWAS Commissioner TBC
- Mr. Mabingue Ngom, UNFPA Regional Director, West and Central Africa Region

Based on the recommendations from the girls and local service providers, ambitions and reactions to the first-hand experiences from ministers, authorities and donors, Plan International, Care International, UNFPA and the GBV AoR will provide a report of the event that will be shared to the GBV Call to Action Group led by Canada, and the Danish Government from January 2021.