ECOSOC 2022 – Side Event Concept Note

Commitment to Action: Women’s Representation Leading to Better Humanitarian Outcomes

Wednesday 22 June 2022; 1:15pm-2:45pm EDT
Conference Room 1, United Nations, New York

Please join a conversation on the critical leadership role of women in improving humanitarian outcomes hosted by the United States, Germany, Colombia, OCHA, UNICEF and UN Women in the margins of the 2022 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment.

Purpose and Objectives
The inclusion of women’s voices in the decision-making processes in crisis settings - be it for humanitarian action or peace negotiations - has been standardized in numerous policies and agreements, including the Grand Bargain, Global Compact on Refugees and the World Humanitarian Summit outcomes.

As with many other commitments to the integration of gender into humanitarian response, translating these words into action remains a challenge that needs to be addressed by all humanitarian stakeholders. Adhering to these global commitments and advancing the localization of humanitarian response requires systematically and proactively establishing opportunities for women and girls to design humanitarian action, incorporating their views into all phases of the operational and programme management cycle.

This side event aims to underline the important role that women, girls and their representative civil society have to play in ensuring any given humanitarian response is inclusive and able to adequately identify and address the needs of all members of a crisis affected population and to present real world examples from local women’s organizations working in crisis contexts on how they have been able to contribute to the ongoing response and what type of support and inclusion they need to continue more effectively.

Format
This event will feature an opening session with remarks from the co-hosts followed by a rich panel discussion featuring women from different country contexts who will share their successful strategies and highlight gaps and challenges. Further, in the subsequent discussion, participants are welcome to share their views on what is needed to support more inclusion of women in leading humanitarian roles.

Background
The important role women and their representative civil society has been universally recognized, however there continues to be a lack of inclusion in humanitarian response planning and implementation. Women’s and girls’ voices are frequently unacknowledged, meaningfully engaged, or included in local humanitarian coordination, advocacy and implementation mechanisms.

According to the IASC Gender Accountability Framework report, 32 per cent of IASC crisis contexts do not consult with any local women’s organizations during the planning process of formulating the crisis response, despite women and girls making up more than 50 per cent of the population in need. Findings and a key recommendation from the 2020 Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls call for the system to strengthen meaningful participation of women in humanitarian decision-making and humanitarian funding mechanisms.
UN Women has recently published a survey on the *Impact of the war in Ukraine on women’s civil society organizations* which is consistent with identified key trends in conflict and humanitarian response: firstly, that women’s organizations pivot from their usual community programming to the provision of crucial humanitarian services for the displaced and the vulnerable and second, that these same women’s groups note that due to the centralization of power and the increased role of the military, women’s participation in decision-making processes has decreased. This decline has led to the side-lining of issues of social development and gender equality. These trends have led to the decline of are women’s meaningful participation in humanitarian decision-making processes across different contexts.

**Opening Remarks:**
- H.E. Thomas Zahneisen, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations
- H.E. Sonia Pereira, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations

**Moderator and Chair:** Kristin Kim Bart, Senior Advisor, VOICE

**Panel Discussion:**
- Negina Yari, Founder of Afghan Women Initiative Center working for Afghan Women Engagement in Economy and Chair of the Afghanistan Women’s Advisory Group
- Guerda Prévilon, President and Executive Director of “Initiative pour le Développement des Jeunes (IDEJEN)
- Asia Almeshgri, Director and Chairperson, Sustainable Development Foundation Yemen
- Viktoria Kravets, Vice Head of the Lviv Children’s Advisory Board, U-Report Ukraine Ambassador & Co-Organizer of Molodvizh
- Saba Gebremedhin, Executive Director for the Network of Ethiopian Women’s Associations (NEWA)

**Interventions from the floor:**
- Joanna Darmanin, Head of Unit, European Union Commission
- Ugochi Daniels, Deputy Director General, IOM
- Kelly T. Clements, Deputy High Commissioner, UNHCR

**Closing Remarks:**
- Robin Brooks, Director, State Department’s Office of International Organizations, Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations

*Registration and Connection Details*
Please register [here](#).

*For colleagues who wish to participate virtually, details will be shared with registered participants*