

ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment High-Level Panel on “Gender Equality: Leadership, decision-making, and participation of women and girls in humanitarian settings”

Friday 25 June, 10:00am-12:00pm, Geneva, Hybrid

Opening Remarks for H.E. Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations and Vice-President of ECOSOC

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Excellencies, Distinguished Panelists, and esteemed guests,

I am pleased to be here today among colleagues and allies to chair this event to discuss ways we can advance women’s leadership in humanitarian crises and their meaningful participation, and make our collective commitments become reality.

This year at ECOSOC HAS, gender equality is on the programme because we recognize the necessity of women’s leadership as an integral part of effective humanitarian action. As you have heard in all of our panel discussions this week, the recognition of how gender affects humanitarian needs together with the need for more women’s voices at the table, whether it be on climate action or food security or protection, has been an overarching theme.

I want to thank Australia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and partners of the IASC Gender Reference Group for joining me in this discussion and for supporting the organization of today’s event, and most importantly for continuing the important work of holding the humanitarian system and Member States accountable on delivering on commitments to support and amplify the voices of displaced women and girls in emergencies.

Women and girls are negatively and disproportionately impacted by disasters and conflict. We’ve heard the figures over the course of this week. These crises affect their life expectancy, education, maternal health, livelihoods, nutrition, and the levels of violence they

experience. At the same time, women are also often first responders and leaders in humanitarian response, though they are often portrayed only as victims and passive beneficiaries of aid.

The diverse women leader speakers we will hear from today, from local and international organizations, Member States, and the UN system, will highlight key examples of the progress we have made in bolstering women's participation and give us insights on the way forward.

I am really thrilled to be joined by them and very much look forward to hearing their ideas and visions, and equally look forward to your participation.