SIDE-EVENT SUMMARY: ESOSOC HAS 2022

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

22 June 2022, 1:15 p.m. – 2:45pm (New York)

1. EVENT SPEAKERS

Co-Chairs
• His Excellency Thomas Zahneisen, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, Germany
• Her Excellency Sonia Pereira, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, Colombia
• Ms. Robin Brooks, State Department’s Office of International Organization Affairs, United States

Moderator
• Ms. Kristin Kim Bart, Senior Advisor, VOICE

Panelists
• Ms. 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 Previlion, President and Executive Director of Initiative pour le Developpement des Jeunes
• 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

2. KEY MESSAGES COMING OUT OF THE EVENT AND THE DISCUSSION

• Translating commitments on women’s participation into action remains a significant challenge.
• It’s not enough for local women to be consulted but must be empowered to make decisions and lead.
• Support to local women’s efforts on the ground is tied to larger gender equality, economic empowerment, and human rights objectives/outcomes.

3. ACTION-ORIENTED STEPS TO OVERCOME KEY ISSUES AND OBSTACLES

4. KEY QUOTES FROM THE DISCUSSION

• “We know that humanitarian assistance is only as good as we are responsive to the people in situations of need”. Mr. Zahneisen, Germany.
• “Women are agents of change. Women are the first responders to crisis and play a central role of the survival and resilience of families and communities”. Ms. Almeshgri, Yemen.
• “A lot of discrimination against women and violence against women and misuse of religious norms. Women are told not to move around without mahram in NGOs, there are rumors about women’s role in NGOs – that they are working with men, misbehaving, sending negative messages – women’s issues are linked to political issues and political objectives”. Ms. Almeshgri, Yemen.
• “There is a perspective that local organizations led by women and girls don’t have the capacity to respond in humanitarian contexts”. Ms. Bart, VOICE.

• “My presence made me able to connect with the displaced women and children, understand their needs, and connect them to the larger humanitarian response. We need to challenge the assumption that women and girls don’t have a role, we have the ability to connect and cooperate with others”. Ms. Kravetz, Ukraine.

• “We have to continue our support of women-led organizations to give them political support to make the case that the Taliban should maintain a good relationship with them”. Ms. Yari, Afghanistan.

• “Donors need to have a clear strategic plan and to involve women leaders in the planning of projects. With the problems we face in the humanitarian situation, and even when we try to expose the needs of women in the political agenda, we find there are no women representatives at the political level”. Ms. Almeshgri, Yemen.

• “We need to move away from consultation of woman to women’s participation in decision-making, its long overdue. Women are largely the first responders during crises, without meaningful participation from the outset, we observe a reversal of gains in gender equality and increase in GBV”. Ms. Tan, UNHCR

[Jessica Moses/HFRMD/ERPS]
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