2015 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment

The Role of Crisis Affected Women and Girls in Shaping an Effective, Inclusive and Coordinated Future of Humanitarian Affairs

IASC Gender Reference Group
18 June, 5h15 – 18h30
Room XXIV, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

This is one of the side-events to be convened during the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, in keeping with this year’s theme: *The future of humanitarian affairs: towards greater inclusiveness, coordination, interoperability and effectiveness.*

**Background**

Without the adequate inclusion of women and girls - and their representative civil-society organizations – in the planning, implementation and coordination of humanitarian action, such efforts will always fall short in identifying and addressing the different needs and vulnerabilities of all members of a crisis affected populations.

As such, and in keeping with the effectiveness and inclusivity themes of the HAS, the side-event will highlight the importance and benefits of women’s civil society to facilitate positive humanitarian outcomes.

The event will provide a platform for UN and civil society women’s representatives - from Sierra Leone and Syria, respectively. They will present their front line experiences of trying to ensure that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls are identified and addressed in the response and recovery to the Ebola crisis and in the on-going Syria conflict.

The African Union’s Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security will discuss the position of women’s representation in official response and planning in crisis affected countries across Africa.

Finally, the side-event will allow for a presentation of the consolidated inputs to date on gender equality and women’s empowerment to the ongoing global consultations towards the World Humanitarian Summit.

**Objectives**

The objective of the side-event is to highlight the importance to the *future of humanitarian affairs* of women’s civil society. They provide the platform to ensure women and girls of crisis affected populations are given the opportunity by national authorities and the humanitarian system to act as active participants, leaders and decision makers in the planning and implementation of the humanitarian action that affects their lives and the future of their families, communities and nations.
Discussion points
• Front-line reflection on the role of women and women’s civil society in recent humanitarian contexts – what gaps remain, best practice and recommendations for the future.

• The work of the African Union in promoting the inclusion of women’s civil society in its member states’ humanitarian and preparedness planning and programming.

• A report on the gender equality in humanitarian action recommendations that have emanated from the consultation process to date for the deliberations and outcomes of the planned World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations
A consolidated message to the World Humanitarian Summit that the future of humanitarian affairs: towards greater inclusiveness, coordination, interoperability and effectiveness is wholly dependent on the representation of women and girls through civil-society in order to ensure the adequate integration of gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian action.

Format
The format of the event will be a presentation from each panelist, followed by an opportunity for Q&A from the audience.

Moderator:
H.E. Steffen Kongstad, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva.

Panel Composition:
• Binetta Diop - The AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security
• Mary Okumu, Sierra Leone Country Representative, UN Women
• Dr Rola Hallam, Hand in Hand, Syria
• Dr Jemilah Mahmood, Chief of the World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat

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