REPORT

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Invest in and Empower Women and Girls affected by Crisis & Fragility

Challenges and Practices from Yemen, DRC and South Sudan

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Background Information

On 12 October 2016, Care International and World Vision organized a roundtable entitled "Invest in and Empower Women and Girls affected by Crisis & Fragility - Challenges and Practices from Yemen, DRC and South Sudan". Hosted by MEP Ulrike Lunacek, this event convened specialists from Care International, World Vision, the European Commission and humanitarian and peace-building agencies.

Key recommendations

1. Ensure a comprehensive approach to sexual and gender-based violence by working on both prevention and response, and by establishing a system that reinforces informal caring and protection support networks that fight the stigma of SGBV.

2. Elevate maternal health and family planning services on par with other life-saving emergency assistance priorities.

3. Provide opportunities for women and girls to be empowered and have their voice heard by systematically consulting and engaging them in humanitarian, development and peace programming.

4. Support and resource gender mainstreaming, make it mandatory across al donor-funded projects, and increase accountability for mainstreaming by collecting appropriate data and using gender-age markers.

5. Advance the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan and UNSCR 1325 and 2250, stressing the importance of equal participation and full involvement of women and girls in all efforts to the maintenance and promotion of peace and securty.

Ulrike Lunacek, Greens, Austria & Vice-President of the European Parliament

99 My personal history has shown me how important it is to give girls options in their lives, so that they can grow up into women who change the world. 66

Key remarks:

1. UNSCR 1325 is a landmark agreement adopted only in 2000. The resolution should be used more effectively in peacebuilding programs. For example, in Colombia, women organizations were asked for the first time in the peace process to join the peace talks in Havana and their demands were included. Of course, women should also be included at the implementation phase to ensure accountability.

2. It is important, that the EU uses the political dialogue with other nations and governments to push for the advancement of gender equality.

Speakers

Erica Hall
Senior Child Rights Policy Adviser World Vision UK

The European Union (EU) and its Member States should serve the needs of the most vulnerable, girls and young women, who often face greater challenges in conflict and in situations of fragility than boys do.

1. Respecting **International Humanitarian Law and Child Rights**.

2. **Ensuring the implementation of Agenda 2030 commitments.** Specific commitments to children have been made through the adoption of Agenda 2030. (target 4.7, 5.2, 5.3, 16.2)- The EU must and should invest more (political and financial) resources in conflict prevention and peacebuilding and ensure children's and women's most basic rights to live free from violence.

3. Developing **comprehensive policies** that fight all forms of violence against children and women in EU Member states and partner countries, and develop specific measures to ensure that girls and women who are directly and indirectly affected by crises are protected.

> **Listening to girls' voices highlights the dangers they are facing but it also shows the real opportunities within the community that makes change possible. So let's not wait 18 years before we hear them.**

Ayesha Kariapper
Director for Regional Impact & Change Management, CARE Middle East-North Africa

1. We need to support and resource gender mainstreaming, make it mandatory across all donor-funded projects, and increase accountability for mainstreaming by collecting appropriate data and using gender-age markers.

2. Maternal health and family planning services should be elevated on par with other life-saving emergency assistance priorities. Including universal free access to family planning; minimal initial service package for reproductive health; and emergency obstetric care.

> **The women and girls in Yemen have not given up – let us not give up on them**

Marina Marchetti
Head of Sector for Gender and Non-Discrimination
DG DEVCO

> 99 *For me, violence against girls and women is not only physical violence, but it also includes hindering their access to education and preventing their participation within the society* 66

1. The EU strongly supported SDG 5 and similar targets in other goals. We have the Global Framework but its implementation is missing. We need to get as far as possible by 2030, and work on norms and gender stereotypes.

2. The EU has spent 128 million euro in 2015 on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). It is also important to invest in gender mainstreaming so we have committed 2.5 billion euro on programs with significant GEWE impacts. Of course it is necessary to follow up with adequate monitoring. In general, there has been a huge increase in funding dedicated to GEWE in the last 5 years. In 2011, 13% of ODA was spent on gender-equality programming, Today it stands at 43%, it is our objective to reach 85% eventually.

Civil Society Respondents

Zarina Khan, Women's Protection and Empowerment Policy Advisor
International Rescue Committee UK

1. We need to adopt a **'whole of girl' approach** through an Adolescent Girls strategy that transcends sectors and disciplines and sets out the positive outcomes we want to see for girls. A dedicated, resourced strategy would allow donors, governments and implementing partners to take into account the specific and unique needs of adolescent girls during crisis. **A comprehensive approach is essential to truly act on the understanding that girls' safety, home life, education, health and sexual health, power and decision making, and ambitions for the future are all inextricably linked.**

2. Girls should be able to lead the design of programmes aimed at them. They should be **consulted from the very beginning**, using participatory research methods, so they have an opportunity to tell the international community about the world as they see it

> 99 *Mainstreaming gender is not delivering the same services to boys and girls, but questioning how to achive the same outcome for girls, women and men* 66

Marie-France Bourgeois
Senior Programme Advisor, UNICEF

> *Sexual violence in conflict does not only happen to those who live there, but also to aid workers who come there to help. We need to protect everybody from it.*

1. We need to work with governments to change the curriculum within the schools to prevent violence to happen in places where children should be safe

2. There should be further promotion of programs that are designed to strengthen support for survivors of sexual violence and transform harmful social norms which contribute to GBV and gender-inequality.

3. It is necessary to provide more child and women friendly spaces within refugee camps as well as migration routes.

Sandra Djuvara Melone, Executive Vice President, Search for Common Ground

1. Strengthen the international framework to empower and protect women and girls: Ratify the Istanbul Convention, implement the Action Plan for Gender Equality, endorse UNSCR 2250 and promote SDG16.

2. Include Women and Youth in **peace processes** and empower them through dialogue and by increasing their presence in the media.

3. The EU is one of the strongest possible actors in peacebuilding, but it should also **focus on prevention** and stop responding solely to crisis once they have erupted.

> *Peace cannot work when one part of the society is excluded, that's incorporating women and young people in the process is the only way to achive lasting peace*