

Key NGO recommendations for the WHS High Level Round Table: “Women and Girls: Catalysing Action to Achieve Gender Equality”

The five proposed core commitments for the High Level Round Table (HLRT) are aligned to the Secretary General’s (SG’s) *Agenda for Humanity* Report, and as NGOs we support the proposed core commitments, which, in summary call for:

1. **The empowerment of women and girls as change agents and leaders;**
2. **Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights;**
3. **Implementation of a coordinated global approach to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in crisis contexts;**
4. **Increased funding and accountability for gender-responsive humanitarian programming;**
5. **Full compliance with humanitarian policies, frameworks and legally binding documents related to gender equality and women’s empowerment.**

While we support all five proposed commitments as NGO’s, we recommend the Dutch government to focus in particular on core commitments 1, 2 and 4. Other important commitments that have already been made in for instance the context of the Call to Action on Violence Against Women and Girls in Emergencies, and the National Action Plan on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 are to be referred to, but not to be reiterated.

We recommend the Dutch government to make the following specific commitments:

Core Commitment 1: Empower women & girls as change agents and leaders, including by increasing support for local women-led groups to participate meaningfully in humanitarian action

1. **Prioritize the empowerment and engagement of local and national organizations that promote women’s rights and gender equality**, and in particular commit to:
 - Strengthen partnerships with a diverse range of local and national women’s rights organisations on both policy decision-making and practice;
 - Increase levels of funding for local and national women’s groups, and other women’s rights organizations by 15% - as part of a larger commitment to ensure increased funding flows to local actors - to support their roles as first responders in humanitarian assistance and protection;
 - Increase financial support to collective financing mechanisms that enable women’s empowerment in humanitarian action by 2018;
 - Support INGO’s, including international women’s organizations, to play their role in strengthening the capacity of local and national women’s right organizations, sharing knowledge and expertise and creating meaningful partnerships, with the aim to increase the absorption capacity of local and national organizations.

2. **Ensure the meaningful and equitable participation of women and adolescent girls** (including women with disabilities, older women, women with HIV/AIDS, women belonging to ethnic, national, sexual or religious minorities) **in the leadership of humanitarian preparedness,**

response, protection and recovery programmes, and the formulation of humanitarian policy, and in particular commit to:

- Ensure that 50% of all humanitarian positions in all stages of preparedness and response, at all levels, are held by women by 2020;
- Ensure that a minimum of 30% representation is guaranteed for women in all local, national and international peace negotiations and conflict transformation processes;
- Encourage all actors to advance women's participation in humanitarian action, and actively support the use of social accountability tools and processes to bring women's voices into needs assessments, design, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian programming as well as DRR and preparedness efforts.

Commitment 2: "Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Program of Action of Int. Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the Outcome docs of the review conferences for all women and adolescent girls in crisis settings"

1. Promote commitments and initiatives on both reproductive health and rights, **and sexual health and rights** in humanitarian response.
2. **Continue and tailor to crisis settings the support to the implementation of the targets for the 2030 Agenda** on maternal, newborn and adolescent health.
3. **Increase funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services in humanitarian response by holding structural political dialogues** with EDs and staff working in humanitarian agencies and NGOs that you fund, stressing the importance of SRHR in humanitarian aid; and applying a comprehensive internationally accepted gender marker that is SRHR sensitive **as a monitoring instrument**.
4. Take a leading role in supporting funding and programming of **access to modern (emergency) contraceptives**, including access to safe abortion, **as elementary in the first humanitarian aid package**; as well as **comprehensive sexuality education for adolescents** (both girls and boys), psycho-social support, and the promotion of **LGBT rights**.
5. **Support initiatives to improve RH commodity supply chain management and security, from the beginning of a crisis response until recovery.** In particular:
 - address logistic supply systems, shortage of reproductive health kits, contraceptives and maternal health lifesaving medicines;
 - make sure that the provision of contraceptives, including emergency contraceptives and access to safe abortion, is included in essential emergency packages;
 - allow for funding of actual stocks.
6. **Support humanitarian programmes that are inclusive and stimulate access to SRH for all, including adolescents and other marginalized groups**, not discriminating on the basis of age, gender, location, sexual orientation and/or marital status.

7. **Support strategies for SRHR capacity building** by:

- Providing support to international donors, Ministries of Health, Disaster Management Institutions, humanitarian aid-organizations, NGOs and community based organizations, health workers and community leaders to lead and manage an effective humanitarian SRHR response;
- Supporting the review of the Minimal Initial Service Package and the application of the IASC GBV guidelines;
- Supporting RH surge capacity, e.g. by the deployment of SRHR sensitive protection officers (ProCap) and gender advisors (GenCap) of the Protection Standby Capacity Project and the Gender Standby Capacity Project.

8. Support the inclusion of **more SRHR indicators in data collection and analysis**, e.g. rapid needs assessments and monitoring & evaluation; and in humanitarian programs coordinated by the **Protection and Health Cluster** of the Humanitarian System.

Commitment 4: Ensure that humanitarian programming is gender responsive, through increased funding and accountability

1. **Apply the IASC, ECHO or other gender and age marker to 100% of your humanitarian funding allocations by 2018**, in order to extend the monitoring of gender-equality measures across the full cycle of humanitarian programming, and promote more rigorous accountability.
2. **Allocate funding (including pooled funding) only to humanitarian actions that explicitly include a gender analysis with sex and age disaggregated data, and can demonstrate how they meet women and girls needs equally with men and boys, by 2018.**
3. **Ensure that all humanitarian response plans and programmes include gender responsive and gender inclusive financial monitoring tools that can be applied throughout humanitarian programme cycle.**
4. **Ensure that all policy and legal responses to displaced populations recognize the gender-specific needs of displaced women and girls at different stages of the displacement cycle;** during flight, settlement and return and do not discriminate different groups (including women with disabilities, older women, women with HIV/AIDS, women belonging to ethnic, national, sexual or religious minorities).