

# The Gender Audit of the meetings in preparation for the Global Refugee Forum 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019: The Intersect of Gender Inequality, Age and Diversity



## THE AIM OF THE GENDER AUDIT OF THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS, THE UNHCR-NGO ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS AND THE GLOBAL FORUM ON REFUGEES, 2019<sup>1</sup>

The Gender Audit process will ensure that the commitments made to refugee women and girls in the Global Compact on Refugees<sup>2</sup> including: gender equality, the implementation of the UNHCR Age Gender and Diversity (AGD) Policy; addressing the different needs of women and men across the life cycle including in childhood and adolescence; considering the impact of discriminations based on sexuality and gender identity and disability and promises to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence are acknowledged in the Pledging, Sponsorship, Co-sponsorship, and Co-conveners process. There will be an emphasis on the importance of AGD and SGBV across the key areas of education, jobs & livelihoods, self-reliance, energy and infrastructure, solutions and protection capacity. It will document examples of good practice in these areas.

### What is a Gender Audit?

A Gender Audit documents the discussion of AGD and SGBV, with a particular focus on women and girls in each meeting involving Member States, United Nation Agencies, Civil society and other actors and combines the findings into a comprehensive report with recommendations. The Gender Audit of the 2017 thematic discussions for the draft Compact on Refugees and the 2017 High Commissioner's Dialogue was extremely successful and contributed to the inclusion of a strong AGD and SGBV focus, with particular commitments to women and girls in the final document<sup>3</sup>.

### Why a focus on gender? An intersectional approach

Gender is a primary social category which is central to the study of intersectionality, including how gender-based discriminations intersect with discrimination and inequalities experienced on the basis of age, ability, sexuality, race, religion and other diversities. This is at the core of UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity Policy. However, despite the concerted efforts of many service providers including civil society and UN Agencies, and significant advances in law and policy over the past 30 years to address the protection needs of refugee women and girls, they are still not effectively addressed. Diverse groups are often not explicitly mentioned, and the gender cross cut in all groups not acknowledged. There is a tendency for these issues to "slip off the table" and meeting reports often do not include their discussion. The aim of the Gender Audit is to ensure that this does not happen again.

### Why a focus on women and girls' strengths and self-representation?

Major obstacles to the provision of adequate responses to women and adolescent girls rest in the way in which they are designated in law and policy. The most common labels are those of "minority" and "vulnerable" groups. However, refugee women, adolescents and girls are not just passive survivors. In many refugee camps and sites, women run *crèches* for children, arrange care for orphaned or lost children, provide safe spaces for women who have experienced sexual and gender-based violence, manage scarce rations to ensure that families are fed, run small businesses, run basic schools, and provide protection such as the building of thorn fences. They also have a keen analysis of the problems experienced in camps and potential solutions. However, because of their minority status, and discourses of vulnerability, their capacities, skills and abilities often go unrecognized. While women's and girls' capabilities and social capital are devalued, 50% of the refugee population's contributions to solutions remain unrecognized.

### Why a focus on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence?

The endemic rape and sexual abuse experienced by the majority of refugee women is a major barrier to many of the protection measures and durable solutions which should be available to all refugees. Men and boys also suffer from the horror of sexual abuse, and this must also be addressed. Women and girls additionally face bearing children of rape, and adolescent girls frequently die from pregnancy when they are too young to bear a child.

<sup>1</sup> Separate Gender Audit Reports will be produced following the 2<sup>nd</sup> preparatory meetings for the Global Refugee Forum and the UNHCR-NGO Consultations in August 2019, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Preparatory meeting in November 2019 and the Global Refugee Forum in December.

<sup>2</sup> Gender commitments in the Global Compact on Refugees - attached

<sup>3</sup> The Final Gender Audit Report, 2017 - attached

## **THE 2019 GENDER AUDIT OF PREPARATORY MEETINGS AND THE GLOBAL FORUM ON REFUGEES**

### **Anticipated Outcomes:**

- UNHCR will have a strong information base from the issues discussed to inform their responses to AGD and SGBV, and to guide their deliberations with Member States and other key stakeholders.
- Concerns articulated by Member States and other stakeholders will be documented.
- The process of the Gender Audit and interventions/presentations by the refugee women will provide evidence and raise awareness of the critical importance of addressing AGD, Gender Inequalities and SGBV as a key part of finding solutions to the refugee crisis.
- Examples of innovative, effective practice provided by the INGO and NGO sector will be documented and presented as examples of the areas to be targeted as part of the pledging process.
- Gaps identified by INGOs and NGOs from their experience in service provision crossing all four pillars of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) will be documented and presented as areas where Pledges could address the gaps.
- The effective participation of refugee women, with support from men and women, the Global Youth Advisory Council and the Global Refugee-led Network will model their potential and challenge currently held stereotypes.
- Provide a baseline for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of gender commitments in the Pledges, and the GCR.

### **AIMS OF THE GENDER AUDIT OF THE UNHCR-NGO CONSULTATIONS, 3 to 5 JULY 2019**

The aims of the gender audit of the UNHCR-NGO Consultations is to ensure that the innovative programs and models of service delivery already in place, and suggestions from INGOs and NGOs towards the implementation of the commitments to the UNHCR Age Gender and Diversity Policy made in the Global Compact on Refugees are fully reflected in the planning and outcomes of the Refugee Global Forum and the Pledging Process. In particular this includes particular commitments to gender equality, refugee participation and to addressing sexual and gender-based violence.

### **Anticipated Outcomes**

- Examples of innovative practice in these areas of concern will be documented and presented as examples of the areas to be targeted as part of the pledging process.
- Practitioners will be encouraged to fill in the on-line form for Best practice in addressing AGD, Gender Inequality and SGBV on the GRF website.
- Gaps identified by INGOs and NGOs from their practical experience will be documented and presented as areas where Pledges could address the gaps.
- UNHCR will have a strong information base from the issues discussed to inform their responses to AGD, Gender Inequality and SGBV.
- Key Stakeholders will have a strong evidence base to support their advocacy with Member States and other key Stakeholders on behalf of AGD and an effective response to SGBV.

### **Participation of Refugee Women**

In order to ensure that the five UNHCR regions are represented, women from three different regions will participate in the June GRF Preparatory meeting and the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations and two from the other regions will participate in the November GRF Preparatory meeting. All five will attend the Global Refugee Forum in December.

### **What can Individuals, NGOs, INGOs and other stakeholders do to assist?**

Please ensure that any interventions and recommendations for Pledges, Sponsorship and Co-sponsorship groups made by you or on behalf of your organisations recognise and explicitly address AGD (and the groups that this includes), SGBV and the intersectional nature of discrimination. Please mention these explicitly, because if it is assumed that they are mainstreamed, they will probably disappear.

For further information, sharing proposals and comments, please contact Dr Linda Bartolomei, [Linda.bartolomei@unsw.edu.au](mailto:Linda.bartolomei@unsw.edu.au), or Adjunct Professor Eileen Pittaway, [Eileen.Pittaway@unsw.edu.au](mailto:Eileen.Pittaway@unsw.edu.au)