

Title: Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence in Emergencies
Sub-Title: Turning WHS Violence into Action



GENERAL INFORMATION

- Thursday, September 22nd, 2016, 1:15pm
- UN Conference Room 6
- Organised by The Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN
- Hashtag: #RoadMap4Action

PANELISTS/PARTICIPANTS

- Moderator: Femi Oke- Al Jazeera English
- Dr. Sarah Sewall- US Undersecretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights
- Stephen O'Brien: Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA
- Margot Wallström, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister
- Jodi Nelson International Rescue Committee- Senior Vice President Policy and Practice
- Maria Al Abdeh- Women Now for Development (Syria)
- Zainab Bangura Special-Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict
- Christos Stylianides- Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management- ECHO
- Dan Seymour, Deputy Director, Programme Division, UN Women
- Lourella Cruz- Representative from Permanent Mission of Mexico
- Lena Ag- Secretary General of Kvinna Till Kvinna
- Ambassador Hasan Ulusoy, Director General for Multilateral Political Affairs

EVENT SUMMARY

The “Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies” facilitated a discussion about how conflict-related SGBV should be conceptualised, and further highlighted existing gaps in the agenda. However the real driving force of the event was how the international community can translate WPS commitments to real, sustainable actions. Panelists emphasized that gender based violence in emergencies is not a women’s issue, but an issue of peace and security, and therefore that the prevention of conflict and

violence is the key to protecting vulnerable populations. It was agreed that the call to action's success depends on increasing localisation, engaging with men and boys, ensuring WPS funding, and guaranteeing accountability. Additionally, panelists stressed the value of a holistic approach to tackle the complex and interconnected variables which contribute to SGBV, and how the international community could effectively measure state and civil society actions and impacts.

TALKING POINTS:

Minister Wallström:

With Sweden joining the Security Council in 2017, Minister Wallström outlined the steps the state will take to bring WPS awareness, knowledge, and financing to the table. First, to ensure that WPS issues are placed at the top of the international agenda, to integrate the agenda into relevant resolutions, and to ask about the needs of women in each and every crisis. Second, to provide support to local actors, both financially and otherwise. Finally, to engage men and boys and recognize that SGBV is an issue of peace and security, and must be treated as such.

Dr Sarah Sewall:

Dr Sewall echoed Minister Wallström's designation of SGBV as a peace and security issue and noted that the protection agenda is too often used to fill the gap of a forgotten aspect of crisis response: the true solution to conflict-related SGBV, is to prevent the conflict itself. Dr. Sewall focused primarily on state actions and capacity building for prevention, protection, and to ensure accountability and justice. She called on states in crisis to give attention to the issue as events unfold rather than as an afterthought, to support localised solutions, create mobile courts and clinics, and for all states to recognize and take responsibility for this issue.

Stephen O'Brien:

Stephen O'Brien began his statements by noting that despite the event's title, protection is too late. Instead, he noted, the international community must recognize the gender specific causes of conflict related SGBV. He applauded Minister Wallström for discussing the engagement of men and boys as a vital dimension of prevention. Mr. O'Brien then focused on delivering on commitments, noting that there is a great deal of good intent, but an absence of coordination. He posed the question to the panel how to translate commitments to actions, how to best mainstream the WPS agenda, and how to measure changes in behaviour of both officials and targeted populations.

Jodi Nelson:

From the perspective of a civil society implementor, Jodi Nelson discussed how humanitarian organisations could improve their prevention efforts. She highlighted that many refugee camps fail to meet the most basic needs of women and girls, such as providing lights and decreasing the distances that must be traveled for food and firewood. The lack of resources, knowledge, training, and skills among organisations that must provide specialized services to vulnerable populations is detrimental to the prevention agenda. Finally, Ms.

Nelson advocated for increased research on the prevention of SGBV in the civil society sector, particularly to generate evidence about what works in prevention and what does not.

Maria Al Abdeh:

As the founder of Women now for Development (Syria) Maria Al Abdeh's statements centered around the importance of working with local actors to prevent conflict and conflict-related SGBV. She called on policy-makers and donors to understand and listen to the voices of women on the ground and support their priorities, because they are the experts in the conflict. She demanded accountability for the Syrian regime, and outlined obstacles for grassroots organisations like her own to become legally established, such as counter-terrorism laws that prevent banks from working with any organisation with Syria in its name.

Lena Ag:

Lena Ag emphasised that as the real changemakers in society, independent feminist movements require support, support that they currently lack. Ag's platform was dedicated to funding, referencing evidence from the 2016 AWID conference that while more broad funding is allocated to gender equality, funding to local women's groups is on the decline. She advocated for increased donations to women's funds.

Christos Stylianides:

Christos Stylianides echoed the other panelists' calls to engage with men and boys and concerns about translating promises into actions. He underscored that the first step towards change is to mainstream and integrate a gender perspective into all actions and frameworks, and additionally emphasized the need to create infrastructure, build capacity and employ result oriented and targeted actions. He noted as an example that the European Commission allocated 20 million dollars to humanitarian efforts Syria, the Horn of Africa, and Bangladesh, specifically earmarked for GBV. Finally, Mt. Stylianides advocated for education, calling for the empowerment of boys and girls to prevent SGBV.

Lourella Cruz:

Following one of the major trends throughout the discussion, Lourella Cruz stressed the necessity of working with women on the ground. She advocated for humanitarian programming that would meaningfully involve women and girls in planning and leadership, while providing practical and technical support. Additionally, she called for gender equality to be addressed multilaterally by governments, women's organisations and human rights defenders.

Tone Skogen:

Tone Skogen expressed her pleasure to see gbv in humanitarian crisis on the agenda of the world humanitarian summit, and welcomed steps take the agenda forward. Her brief statement sought to ensure the increased participation of women and girls in the decisions that affect their lives, stated the GBV efforts must be afforded the same attention as other life-saving priorities in crises, and called for aid organisations to document how gender is integrated into their programs.

SRSG Bangura:

SRSG Bangura drew attention to the link between protection and empowerment, stating that one cannot exist without the other. The majority of her statement addressed

accountability and engaging with government actors in crisis states. The SRSG relayed her personal experiences of war and of confronting the leaders of Syria and South Sudan about SGBV, stating that it is vital to confront actors who deny abuses occur. Additionally, she emphasized the role of local actors, calling for the provision of capacity and resources to the people who truly understand and have been affected by the conflict.

Ambassador Ulusoy:

The Ambassador focused his speech on support activities in crisis and resettlement countries. He sought to discuss concrete measures for change and advised that when attempting to measure progress, to focus on the perceptions of the affected communities and those receiving aid. He also reminded the audience to contribute to projects in Syria's neighbouring countries where large numbers of refugees reside, and indicated that Turkey would be amenable to contributing to such projects.

Dan Seymour:

Dan Seymour summarised one of the discussion's major trends, that GBV is influenced and impacted by a spate of other issues such as education, access to services, and male socialisation. He stated that the bottom line came to women being less vulnerable when empowered. He then highlighted the need for the international community to thoroughly monitor commitments and promote transparency. Furthermore, he called attention to the lack of funding for local organisations, and asked that aid be given more directly.

ACTION STEPS:

Though many broad action steps have been discussed above, the statements below outlined specific measures for change.

Funding:

- [Global Acceleration Instrument Trust Fund](#)- allows to give money directly to women's orgs on the ground. (Suggested by Dan Seymour)
- [Follow the Money](#)- Mechanism to track whether states are putting their money where their mouth is.(Suggested by Dan Seymour)
- Establish regional consortium of clearing houses for administering grants to micro-organisations. The consortium could become accountable for legal regulations, reporting requirements, and steep dues, while local organisations will be free to do the work essential to their success. (Suggested by Dr. Sarah Sewell)

Accountability

- [Real time Accountability Partnership- \(RTAP\)](#)- first GBV partnership for accountability which pushes donors, member states, human organisations to fulfill commitments to addressing gbv from the start of humanitarian emergencies- a framework existing for implementation of commitments. (Suggested by Dr. Sarah Sewall)

Empowerment:

- [Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection Programmes](#) & [Oasis Centers](#)- regional services and support, employment, education services. (Suggested by Dan Seymour)

Services:

- For protection: basic services should be provided such as lavatories for schools, lights in camps, access to food and firewood, reproductive health services etc. (Suggestions from Jodi Nelson, Stephen O'Brien, and Dan Seymour)
- Political Lobbying: One way to leverage the coalition around the call to action is lobbying more for resources, structural reflections, and ties around wps agenda to strengthen and unite communities (Suggested by Dr. Sarah Sewall).

QUOTES

Margot Wallström: *"This is not a women's issue, this is a peace and security issue."*

Jodi Nelson: *"It is people's jobs to understand and integrate guidelines for prevention and response- we must move from this being a principle or norm- to this being part of the job and your success rides on how well you do it. We should not have to rely on the good-will of our staff or wonder whether staff identify as feminists- it should be part of their jobs. That kind of professionalisation is something we do not talk sufficiently about."*

Dr. Sarah Sewall: *"These are not a few bad actors, these are not aborations, these are a systematic policies seen used globally to advance political agendas, always accompanied by violence and they need to be addressed by the state. They are state responsibilities to citizens and they are central to the issues of governing and legitimacy"*

Maria Al Abdeh: *"if you want change in syria, the real experts are the women on the ground, and we have to listen to them"*

Christos Stylianides: *"How is education connected to gbv? Because education is the basis of everything else. It is a shield against radicalisation, it is a shield against forced recruitment, it is a shield against exploitation, in short knowledge is a shield, and we need this knowledge especially in conflict areas quite essential gender equality through education in emergencies."*