



## Voice-Visibility-Influence:

### Promoting Women's Leadership in Humanitarian Settings Through Partnerships with Women-Led and Women's Rights Organisations in Humanitarian Settings in Asia and the Pacific

## A UN Women and Grand Bargain Friends of Gender Group Consultation Workshop, co-hosted by Care International, Oxfam International and OCHA

26 August 2019, Mercure Jakarta Cikini Hotel, Jakarta, Indonesia

UN Women and the Grand Bargain Friends of Gender are organising a Consultation with women's organisations, co-hosted by Care International, Oxfam International and OCHA. This Consultation workshop will take place in the Mercure Jakarta Cikini Hotel on 26 August 2019. The Consultation workshop takes place 1 day before the Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Localisation of Aid, led by IFRC and SDC (27 and 28 August, Jakarta).

### 1. Objectives of the Consultation Workshop

The overall objective is to develop region-specific charter of demands and recommendations to influence the global discussions on localisation and participation revolution under the umbrella of promoting gender responsive action in humanitarian settings. The consultation will feed into the Regional Conference on Localisation on 27 and 28 August 2019 in Jakarta.

### 2. Context:

More than 135.7 million people around the world need humanitarian assistance today. <sup>1</sup> The Asia-Pacific region accounts for 41 per cent of all disasters worldwide – and over 90 per cent of all global deaths from disasters – in the past decade. <sup>2</sup> Available statistics in the region and globally show that women, girls and marginalised groups are more likely to die in disasters.

Yet women are not just victims in disasters and crises; they are also key agents of change. In the face of natural hazards, women bring invaluable contextual knowledge, skills, resources and experiences to disaster preparedness, response and resilience building, and their proven skills in community mobilisation positions them to be transformational agents in emergency preparedness and building resilience. <sup>3</sup> Women are often the first responders to a crisis and play a central role in the survival and resilience of families and communities. Local

women's groups are often best placed to mobilise change, identify solutions and respond to crises. Women's leadership is seen as key in promoting transformative change, resilience and social cohesion in humanitarian settings.

The role of the civil society and, in particular, local women's organisations is life-saving, critical to ensure an appropriate, effective and sustainable response to crises and to pave the way to self-reliance, recovery and resilience of women and girls and crisis affected populations more broadly. As an urgent matter both of principle and effectiveness, humanitarian efforts must recognise the rights, roles and agency of women and girls. Furthermore, a specific focus needs to be put on the intersectionality of multiple forms of discrimination that can drastically intensify marginalisation of women and girls, including disability, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation among others, in order to effectively achieve UN's commitment to 'leave no-one behind'.

Despite their critical contributions, women and girls are often excluded from decision-making processes that shape response strategies to crises and disasters. Challenges continue to persist in promoting equality and achieving meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making processes and leadership structures. Funding for local responders remains limited, and even where overall humanitarian funding for national and local actors has increased, it is often still channelled to gender-blind or male-dominated actors in the country, rather than translating to better resourcing for women's groups and organisations. <sup>4</sup> Such streaming of national and local funding, far from meeting the goals of the WHS and Agenda 2030 commitments to leave no one behind, can instead reinforce marginalisation and exclusion of women and girls from the decisions on humanitarian aid that affect their lives. <sup>5</sup> Furthermore, despite recent increases, the total bilateral aid allocated to programmes with the primary objective of targeting gender equality and the empowerment of women in conflict-affected countries remains low, at 5 per cent of total bilateral aid to such countries according to the 2018 SG's Report on Women, Peace and Security.

### 3. Background on the localisation workstream and Friends of Gender Group

The 'localisation' term has gained currency over the last two years, in part due to the comments made during the consultation phase of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), as well as to the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing Report. The Grand Bargain "Localisation Workstream" (Workstream 2: More support and funding tools to local and national responders) sets out an agenda for localisation in four areas: capacity investment and partnership, coordination, funding and measurement. A feminist approach to localisation would seek to further tackle power imbalances and patriarchal structures in humanitarian action by shifting power to national and local women's rights actors, which should result in improved outcomes for women and girls and their communities.<sup>6</sup>

UN Women and the Grand Bargain Informal Friends of Gender Group have put the issue of increased, quality and sustainable funding for local women's organisations and civil society at the centre of discussions in the context of the localisation workstream. Recognising the important role that local women's and women led organisations play as first and local responders in humanitarian settings, the WS on localisation adopted gender indicators to guide the 2018 Grand Bargain Annual Reporting process. The objective is to track institutional commitments towards gender responsive localisation looking into issues of funding and partnerships with local women's and women-led organisations.

### 4. Consultation with Local Women's Organisations

The WS on localisation, under the leadership of IFRC and Swiss Development Cooperation, has organised three Regional Conferences (Africa, Middle East and Asia Pacific) and a Global Conference between July to September 2019. The conferences aim at bringing together key stakeholder groups in the respective regions/countries to share recent developments in relation to progress on localisation and ensure integration of regional perspectives in the global guidance products developed by the Members of the Group.

In close collaboration with the WS co-conveners and the Friends of Gender Group, UN Women organises consultations with local women's organisations, co-hosted by Care International, Oxfam International and OCHA. The overall objective is to develop region-specific charter of demands and recommendations to influence the global discussions on localisation and participation revolution under the umbrella of promoting gender responsive action in humanitarian settings. Furthermore, recommendations from participants are expected to inform UN Women and partner engagement in the formulation and roll out of regional and national priority frameworks on resilience, preparedness, recovery, humanitarian action and emergency response plans.

Across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, UN Women is committed to expanding geographic coverage and scaling up partnerships with local women's organisations in humanitarian, conflict and post conflict contexts both in its role as the Secretariat of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund; and through its country level programming on Humanitarian Action and Crisis response, DRR and Resilience in 58 countries with focus on crisis affected women's and girls' protection, livelihoods, leadership and second chance education.

The regional events will enable a discussion with humanitarian actors on entry points to further scale up partnerships with local and national women's organisations and women responders as follow up to the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the Grand Bargain core commitments on localisation and participation revolution, as well as the IASC Gender Policy and Accountability Framework.

### 5. Participants

This workshop will bring together approximately 25 participants, including:

- Representatives from women-led and women's rights organisations;
- Localisation workstream co-conveners and members;
- Friends of Gender Group members;
- UN Women and other UN agency staff at regional and country levels.

#### Footnotes:

1. OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview 2018
2. EM-DAT 3
3. Action Aid (2016). On the Frontline: Catalysing Women's Leadership in Humanitarian Action.
4. Care International and ActionAid (2018). Not what she bargained for? Gender and the Grand Bargain.
5. Ibid.
6. OXFAM Canada (2018), A feminist approach to localization, available at: <https://www.oxfam.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/a-feminist-approach-to-localization.pdf>