



**Thematic Session**  
**Crisis in the Achievement of Gender Equality in Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action**

**Concept Note**  
**March 29th, 2021**  
**11:30 – 12:50 (GMT-6 Mexico City Time)**  
**20:30 – 21:50 (GMT-6 Mexico City Time)**

## **Background**

In 1995, the landmark Beijing Platform for Action flagged 12 key areas where urgent action was needed to ensure equality and opportunities for women and girls. One of the key areas of priority was women and armed conflict.

In 2000, UN (United Nations) Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) recognized for the first time the differentiated impact of conflict in women and girls and reaffirmed the key role of women's participation in all efforts to achieve peace and security, addressing four intertwined pillars: participation, prevention, relief, and recovery. Evidence around the world shows that ensuring women's participation in peace and security efforts is not only a matter of women's rights but contributes to making peace more durable and sustainable. Following the adoption of UNSCR 1325, nine additional Security Council resolutions on WPS (Women Peace and Security) have been adopted, as well as CEDAW General Recommendation 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict, and post-conflict situations.

In the case of humanitarian action, recognizing the differential impact of crises on women, girls, men and boys, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian action has enjoyed significant recent gains in global normative commitments, as well as investment in the creation of system wide resources and tools. These include the World Humanitarian Summit (2015), the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (2015), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies (2015), and the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants (2016). Such progress demonstrates a recognition of gender in humanitarian action as not only a rights-based issue, but also as an essential contributor to effective delivery of sustainable results across the peace-humanitarian-development nexus.

Although the world has changed since the Beijing Platform for Action and the adoption of UNSCR 1325, there have been several successes in implementation over the past decades: As of January 2021, at least 95 States had translated the women, peace and security agenda into national action plans. The international community has adopted a comprehensive normative framework regarding sexual violence in conflict. Worldwide,

the percentage of peace agreements with gender equality provisions has increased from 14 to 22 per cent between 1995 and 2019. In the first five years since Resolution 1325 was adopted, only 15 per cent of Security Council resolutions included explicit references to women, peace and security issues; between 2017 and 2019, this number was approximately 70 per cent.

For humanitarian action, the global body for the coordination of humanitarian action, the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC), adopted, in 2017, a renewed gender in humanitarian action policy in 2017 reflecting the commitments to gender developed in the recent normative gains, including the World Humanitarian Summit and the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants. The policy provides specific, prescribed standards and roles and responsibilities on how the UN led humanitarian coordination systems and its representation in the field will integrate gender into the planning and implementation of crisis response.

However, much of the progress toward the implementation of resolution 1325 and gender in humanitarian action (GiHA) commitments continues to be measured in ‘firsts,’ rather than as standard practice. Obstacles and challenges persist and prevent the full implementation of the WPS and GiHA agenda. Regarding sexual violence, despite the comprehensive normative framework, there are very few actual prosecutions, particularly at the national level. Though the participation of women in formal peace processes has been inching up, between 1992 and 2019, women constituted, on average, only 13 per cent of negotiators, 6 per cent of mediators, and 6 per cent of signatories in major peace processes worldwide.

Similarly in crisis contexts, the voices of crisis affected women and girls are often marginalized in the development of strategic response plans, with 40 per cent of planning processes reported no meaningful engagement with local women’s organizations in the planning and prioritization of humanitarian response plans.<sup>1</sup> The rise of violent extremism in many parts of the world has led to a real threat to the lives of women as well as to a cycle of militarization where women are often in an ambivalent position, rejecting the structures on their conduct by violent extremists but wanting to protect their families and their communities from polarization and threat.

Though there is a great deal of rhetoric supporting women, peace and security, funding for programmes and processes remains abysmally low across all areas of the agenda. Total bilateral allocable aid committed to support gender equality in fragile and conflict-affected countries continued to increase, with \$20.5 billion per year between 2017-2018, compared to \$18 billion per year between 2015-2016. However, bilateral aid to women organizations has stagnated at 0.2 per cent of bilateral aid to conflict-affected

<sup>1</sup> IASC Gender Accountability Framework 2020



contexts. In addition, programming targeting gender specific needs in crisis settings remains deprioritized, with only 39% of requested funds being received.<sup>2</sup>

Women's leadership is more urgently needed than ever before as conflicts and humanitarian crises become more complex, violent, and protracted, and combined with new threats such as the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a need to replace punitive laws with comprehensive social interventions in search of justice for survivors and victims of human rights violations. As governments, there is a need to reject authoritarian responses to crises and conflicts, for example, by increasing securitization and militarization and, instead, reallocate the resources for militarization established in official budgets and allocate them to improve the public infrastructure and social safety nets.<sup>3</sup>

Understanding that the distinct needs, priorities and capacities of women and girls, as well as men and boys of different ages and backgrounds, is critical to effective humanitarian responses, and the full and effective participation of women is sustaining peace, preventing and resolving conflict is critical, in July 2020, the Generation Equality Forum announced the development of a Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (the Compact), as one of the outcomes of the Forum, aimed at fostering implementation of existing commitments on women, peace and security and humanitarian action.

The Compact will put in place a voluntary multi-stakeholder monitoring and accountability process aimed at engaging key global, regional and national actors to implement existing commitments established for women, peace and security and humanitarian action. The Compact is a unique opportunity to integrate an inter-generational approach to dismantle discriminatory barriers that prevent women's equal participation at the forefront of peace, security, and humanitarian efforts, and to promote and protect women's human rights and the work of women peacebuilders and women human rights defenders, as well as ensure women's leadership in all peace and humanitarian decision-making processes.

## General Objective

This thematic session aims to analyze how the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) outcomes, including the Compact, can accelerate implementation of the WPS agenda and gender equality in humanitarian action and promote accountability at different levels to boost the effective implementation of commitments in this field.

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<sup>2</sup> UN Women UNFPA – [Funding for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian programming \(2020\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> *Mujeres Transformando radicalmente un mundo en crisis*, Un Marco de referencia para Beijing+25 elaborado durante una reunión estratégica de activistas feministas en la Ciudad de México, del 22 al 24 de agosto de 2019.

The objective is to identify and analyze specific actions and proposals that seek to strengthen the WPS and gender in humanitarian action agendas – as well as across the peace, humanitarian-development- nexus -to identify concrete action-oriented activities to pursue in the coming months and provide insights for the Compact on WPS.

The event would shed light on how to build synergies across the Compact, the Generation Equality Action Coalitions, the Group of Friends of WPS, and the Informal Group of WPS of the Security Council, the WPS Focal Points Network, regional organizations, and civil society.

### Specific Objectives

The event will be to explore action-oriented solutions to:

- Enhance coordination efforts for the implementation of the current normative frameworks, commitments, standards, and responsibilities to promote multi-stakeholder coordination in the effective implementation of WPS and Humanitarian Action agenda.
- Understand and strengthen links with overlying agendas such as youth, peace and security; protection of human rights and environment defenders; children in armed conflict; disarmament and non-proliferation; climate change; trafficking of small arms and light weapons; mediation and peaceful settlements of disputes, preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism; women and girl refugees and internally displaced; disaster risk reduction; and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Work with strategic actors such as civil society organizations and academia, to implement actions that ensure the meaningful participation of women, as well as a gender-based analysis in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace building, and humanitarian decision-making and response.
- Establish alliances with humanitarian organizations and women peacebuilders to monitor and ensure accountability of the Compact.
- Mobilize and increase financial commitments to advance the implementation of the WPS agenda.
- Promote that COVID-19 response plans and measures consider the protection of human rights and gender equality, including through the evaluation of the impact of the pandemic in the effective implementation of the WPS agenda.
- Enhance international and regional cooperation schemes on WPS and identify and share lessons learned and best practices.

## Participants

This thematic dialogue, in the form of a virtual discussion, pretends to include speakers from Member States, and interested Agencies and Programs and civil society, moderated by an experienced feminist expert.

## Format

This virtual dialogue will take place on the Generation Equality Forum platform. The discussion will be driven by an experienced feminist moderator who will direct the conversation between nine different stakeholders and the audience to ensure a diversity of views. The audience will be able to interact by using the chat on the platform. Simultaneous interpretation will be available.

Suggested time	Proposed activity
11:30 – 11:35 20:30 – 20:35	Welcome and panelists' presentation.
11:35 – 12:25 20:35 – 21:25	Moderated discussion around the guiding questions. Participants have between 3-4 minutes to answer each question. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can we learn from the implementation of UNSC1325 National Action Plans as a means to localize the WPS agenda and boost action at the national level?</li> <li>• How can we ensure the gender responsiveness of humanitarian coordination mechanisms and facilitate women's access to opportunities to exercise their political rights, participate in decision-making, exercise leadership, and contribute to peace building and humanitarian processes?</li> <li>• How to advance implementation of the WPS Agenda beyond the UN Security Council discussions and leverage opportunities at the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Peace building Commission, and regional organizations with the active support and engagement of civil society, including through the Compact on WPS?</li> <li>• How can international organizations, governments, civil society and the private sector concrete actions to leverage political will</li> </ul>



	<p>to ensure that peace efforts during the current Covid-19 pandemic are inclusive and gender sensitive?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the numbers of displaced due to conflict rising every year and the length of that displacement increasing by years, what are the specific levers required to address the needs of refugee and IDP women and girls across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus?</li> </ul>
<p>12:25 – 12:45 21:25 – 21:45</p>	<p>Q&amp;A session. Moderator reads selected questions from the chat.</p>
<p>12:45 – 12:50 21:45 – 21:50</p>	<p>Closing: moderator thanks participants and audience.</p>