



(Glossary of Acronyms – P 18)

The Aim of The Gender Audit of The Global Refugee Forum 2019

The Gender Audit was instigated to ensure that the commitments made to refugee women and girls in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)¹ were acknowledged in the Pledging, Sponsorship, Co-sponsorship, and Co-conveners process and at the **Global Refugee Forum** (GRF). There was an emphasis on the importance of commitments to women and girls, Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD), and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) across the key areas of education, jobs and livelihoods, self-reliance, energy and infrastructure, solutions and protection capacity. It has documented examples of good practice in these areas. The Gender Audit at the GRF was undertaken by a team of seven refugee women from the five UN regions, academic support staff Adjunct Associate Professor Eileen Pittaway, and Dr Linda Bartolomei, from the University of New South Wales, Australia, and help from a team of volunteers. They were honoured to have the space to give a strong statement in the final plenary.² All reports, including this final report were co-authored by the Gender Audit team members, from their consolidated documentation of each session.

¹ 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 (SGBV)

². (See <https://www.unhcr.org/events/conferences/5d88a9f74/gender-audit-first-preparatory-meeting-global-refugee-forum.html>, <https://www.unhcr.org/5d88ab6e7.pdf>, <https://www.unhcr.org/5deea757.pdf> <https://www.unhcr.org/5d974f694.pdf> for the full reports.)

Analysis of the success of the Gender Audit of the Global Refugee Forum from the Gender Audit Team

In total, over the three-day event there were two days of Plenary sessions, including Debate, Panels and Dialogues, 48 Spotlight Sessions and six Special Events. The majority of these were documented by the Gender Audit team and volunteers. Additionally, there were 24 events in the Speakers Corner, and a Market Place. As well as documenting, the team contributed their observations of the Forum and the ways in which women and girls, gender equality, SGBV and AGD were addressed by key stakeholders. Over 774 Pledges were submitted at the time of the GRF, with more promised as an outcome of the meeting. While there is a listing of many by title, the complete listing, and full content is not yet available. **Of the 588 pledges submitted to UNHCR by December 12, 2019, prior to the GRF, 19 mentioned gender in the title of the Pledge, 19 mentioned women and girls, two mentioned SGBV and four mentioned GBV - a total of 44.** It is anticipated that once the detail of the pledges is made available, there will be significantly more mention of these key areas in the content of many others.

Highlights of the Plenary, High-level Panels and Spotlight Sessions

UNHCR as a “family”, and in particular the many dedicated staff who worked so hard to achieve the often-ground-breaking results relating to AGD and SGBV must be congratulated on what was undoubtedly a very successful Global Refugee Forum. The commissioning of the Gender Audit process was courageous, as it was acknowledged that there would be criticism. The support given to the members of the Gender Audit team was exemplary. It was excellent to see the inclusion of so many participants from a refugee background on Panels, in Spotlight Sessions and in Special Events. This included all the members of the Gender Audit team, who were given maximum exposure. In fact, the calls on their time were so great that they had difficulty documenting all of the sessions. Fortunately, there was a team of volunteers who stepped in to document and ensure that the team had the space to take part across a range of activities. The calibre of the refugees and the value of their participation was outstanding. If their inputs are included in the official meeting notes, and in the planning, implementation and evaluation process, they should lead to more practical and effective strategies in the future.

In many sessions of the GRF, there was well articulated support for the implementation of a strong AGD framework and an effective response to SGBV from many Member States from the global south as well as the global north. This included a call to acknowledge that rape of refugees is a crime in most countries in the world, and that under the international protection regime, rape of a refugee is a criminal act wherever it takes place. As with other major crimes, such as murder, action must be taken to both prevent rape and other forms of sexual and gender related abuse and to prosecute and punish the perpetrators. Many INGOs and NGOs previously silent on gender equality also took a stance on these issues. A full analysis of the pledges to identify which address women and girls, gender equality, ADG and SGBV will identify if the support articulated by stakeholders at the GRF has been reflected in commitments made. The full list of pledges was not available at the time this report was written. A gender analysis of pledges made until the end of March 2020 will be available from the gender audit team in April 2020.

Day 1 Monday 16th December

Thirty-six Spotlight sessions, four Special Events and eleven Speakers Corner presentations were held in addition to twelve stalls in the Marketplace which presented a range of good practices, several of which included a focus on AGD³.

³ (See full GRF programme at <https://www.unhcr.org/5e1dd4747>)

Brief Gender analysis of the Spotlight, Special Sessions and the Speakers Corner

Spotlight Sessions

Three Spotlight sessions included a central or significant focus on refugee women and girls and the Age, Gender and Diversity Approach. These were:

1. *Securing her Future: Proven approaches to ensuring a quality secondary education for refugee girls* (Panel Parity Female: 6 Male: 2)
2. *Time to Act: taking a proactive approach to reducing maternal and newborn deaths* (Panel Parity Female: 6 Male: 3)
3. *Engage, Participate, Advocate! Young People and Women Leading* (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 2)

In twenty - three sessions, either the moderator or panellists included at least some reference to women and girls, addressing sexual and gender-based violence and the AGD approach (See Annexe 1 for a full list of the sessions). The sessions which included the most substantial focus were:

1. *Promoting partnerships among diverse stakeholders in supporting national protection capacity and the provision of legal aid services to asylum seekers and refugees* (Panel Parity Female: 5 Male: 2)
2. *Energy and Infrastructure Sustainable Energy for Food Security and Nutrition in Refugee and Host Community Settings* (Panel Parity Female: 0 Male: 5)
3. *Role of German Private Sector in Economic Inclusion* (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 2)
4. *A Whole of Society Approach to Addressing Displacement in MENA* (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 4)
5. *Including ALL - New Approaches to Financing, Resilience and Sustainability for WaSH* (Panel Parity Female: 6 Male: 4)

In each of these Spotlight sessions, at least one of the panellists gave significant attention to the gender dimensions of their topic, including the need for gender sensitive legal services, targeted livelihood strategies for women and girls, and the importance of involving women, youth, people with a disability and those from LGBTI communities in the design and implementation of services. In the Spotlight Session on WaSH, UNFPA announced a joint pledge with UNHCR for 'Improved access to safe, quality and dignified menstrual hygiene management for refugees and host communities.'

Regrettably, in ten of the Spotlight sessions the moderator and panellists were completely silent on the particular needs of women and girls, gender equality and AGD considerations. These included:

1. *Innovations Across the Refugee Resettlement Journey* (Panel Parity Female: 2 Male: 3)
2. *The Role of Islamic Financial Institutions* (Panel Parity Female: 0 Male: 5)
3. *Improving the Refugee Response Through Evidence* (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 5)
4. *Improving Teacher Support in Crisis Contexts* (Panel Parity Female: 2 Male: 3)
5. *IGAD Comprehensive Regional Response for Refugees* (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 2)
6. *Innovations for Refugee Livelihoods: SGD Impact Accelerator* (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 6)
7. *Bright Futures: The Promise of Early Childhood Development in Crisis Settings* (with the exception of a very welcome intervention by PLAN to announce 3 pledges related to Gender and Education) (Panel Parity Female: 7 Male: 1)
8. *Refugee Sponsorship: Building Communities Through Partnership* (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 8)
9. *Launching the Asylum Capacity Support Group (ACSG) Mechanism* (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 4)
10. *The Syrian Refugee Crisis – Delivering in Partnership* (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 3)

Special Events

Of the four special events, three included some focus on women and girls and AGD considerations:

1. *IGAD Comprehensive Regional Response for Refugees* (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 2)
2. *MIRPS High Level Event* (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 6)
3. *Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees Support Platform* (Panel Parity Female: 1 Males: 5)

However, the Launch of the Global Academic Network was a disappointingly gender silent event despite the number of women on the panel (Panel Parity Female: 6 Male: 2). Gender equality was only raised in one intervention by an NGO who asked:

'Is there an open inclusion of gender and the LGBTQI community in the guiding principles of the network?'

In her reply panellist, Tsion Tadesse Abebe, Institute for Security Studies, Ethiopia, said that she *'did not hear much on women and girls, noting, we used to hear more on women, peace and security ...,but we hear less now. The focus is more on migration'*.

Speakers Corners

Eleven Speakers Corners were held in the lunchtime. These ten-minute presentations provided an opportunity to share good practices and raise new and emerging issues in a creative and

engaging format. While the team were unable to attend more⁴ than a few and therefore cannot comment on the inclusion of gender equality issues across the sessions, they did document an excellent presentation on LGBTQI inclusion: *Refugee women organising identifying protection needs, building solidarity, working towards solutions* presented by Tina and Renee Dixon.

Day 2 Tuesday 17th December

Opening Plenary/Debate on Burden and Responsibility Sharing

While UNHCR are to be congratulated for mobilising such high-level support from key host governments to join the Opening Plenary, it was disappointing from a gender perspective to observe an all-male panel of presenters in the opening plenary. As the panel involved the co-sponsoring states of Switzerland, Turkey, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Costa Rica and Germany along with the UNHCR High Commissioner and the UN Secretary General, it is acknowledged that achieving gender balance was largely out of UNHCR's control, particularly as Angela Merkel withdrew only at the last minute. While Aya Abdullah, a young refugee woman, did speak during the opening session, she, unfortunately, did not sit on the opening panel. Her inclusion on this panel would have sent a powerful message on gender and refugee inclusion. It was also disappointing that with the exception of one mention of SGBV by the UN Secretary General, Mr Antonio Guterres, that all other presentations during the opening panel were silent on women and girls, gender equality SGBV and AGD.

Brief gender analysis of the Spotlight Sessions

Six Spotlight sessions were held during the lunch break. **Five of the six included either a significant focus on, or at least some mention of women and girls, SGBV, gender equality or AGD considerations.** These included the Session on SGBV: *Women do Talk about Sexual and Gender Based Violence* (Panel Parity Female: 6 Male: 2), which was co-sponsored by the UNSW Gender Audit team, UNHCR, ANCORW, GRN, WRC, PLAN and OXFAM as well as the Governments of Australia, the USA, Norway and Canada. The session was very well attended, with standing room only.

The other sessions which included some focus on women and girls, gender equality issues SGBV or AGD were:

1. *Development and HDP Nexus Addressing Forced Displacement* (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 3).
2. *Green Responses to Refugee Situations – Urgent Need for Sustainable Energy Solutions* (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 7).
3. *Alleviating Extreme Poverty Amongst Refugees and Host Community Members* (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 2).
4. *Inclusion of Refugees in National Education Systems* (Panel Parity Female: 5 Male: 7).

However, the session *Making the Vision of the Three-Year Strategy A Reality* (Panel Parity Female: 2 Male: 2), was disappointingly silent on women and girls, gender equality issues and AGD and SGBV, despite the well-known challenges associated with ensuring that refugee women

⁴ The team did not have the capacity to cover all the Speaker's corner events or to assess to gender inclusion of Market place stalls due to the number of concurrent Spotlight sessions also held during the lunchtime.

can equally benefit from complementary pathways to support labour mobility. It was equally surprising that the good practice resettlement programs, in particular the Women at Risk Program was not mentioned.

High-level sessions on *Solutions* (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 2), and on *Comprehensive Responses in Action* (Panel Parity Female: 2 Male: 3), were held as part of the afternoon plenary session and the General Debate on *Burden and Responsibility Sharing* continued. A refugee woman from Uganda joined the High-Level session on *Solutions* and disappointingly she was **the only panellist** to include a focus on women and girls and the importance of the meaningful inclusion of refugees including refugee women in peacebuilding and durable solutions. During the panel on *Comprehensive Responses in Action*, the representative of the USA Government noted the importance of funding essential and life-saving programs to address infant and maternal mortality, however gender equality considerations were not addressed by other panellists.

Day 3 Wednesday 18th December

The General Debate on Burden and Responsibility Sharing continued in both the morning and afternoon. In addition, Four High Level Panels were held during the morning.

Of particular note were the *High-level Dialogue on Protection Capacity* (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 2). The panellists and many interventions by States and NGOs included a very strong focus on women and girls, gender equality issues, AGD and addressing SGBV. There were many mentions of women and girls, the urgent need for menstrual hygiene materials and importance of the meaningful participation of refugees.

The *High-Level Panel on Education* (Panel Parity Female: 12 Male: 7), also included a robust gender equality focus from both the refugee and donor state panellists. There were two refugee women on the panel and both emphasised the importance of education for both boys and girls as well as for all youth. The Governments of the USA and Canada committed their continued financial support for targeted programs to support the inclusion of refugee girls. Both UN WOMEN and PLAN noted that early and forced marriage and gender discrimination are key barriers to girls' education. *Education Cannot Wait* emphasised that systems must be adapted to ensure the inclusion of all refugees, including girls and other groups facing structural discrimination, including those with a disability and the LGBTI community. The World Bank committed 2.2 billion to improve learning outcomes for **both girls and boys**.

During the *High-Level Dialogue on Livelihoods* (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 3) only one panellist from the International Finance Cooperation mentioned gender issues. He noted that there are “two reasons why equal treatment matters - women have to take on new and often unfamiliar responsibilities often taking on the role of breadwinners- gender sensitivity is fundamental and has to be an integral part of everything we do and be a constant”. Several interventions by states, including Germany, the United Kingdom and the EU highlighted the need to focus programs on women survivors of SGBV but also to recognise them as agents of change.

The *High-Level Panel on Energy* (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 5) included some discussion of the risks of SGBV associated with firewood collection and the lack of lighting in camps. The health risks for women giving birth at night in clinics without power was also discussed. However, there was no significant analysis of other gender dimensions of affordable and sustainable access to fuel. For example, the cost of gas, the capacity of older, disabled or pregnant single women to collect and carry gas cylinders and the associated risks of survival sex were not mentioned.

Brief gender analysis of the Spotlight Sessions

Six Spotlight sessions and one Special Event- the Women Leaders Roundtable lunch - were held during the lunch break. Four of the six included either a significant focus on, or at least some mention of women and girls, gender equality SGBV or AGD considerations. This included the Session: *"Not Just an Acronym! Age Gender, Disability, and Diversity (AGDD) – What Cross-Cutting Themes Mean in Practice?"*. This session was co-sponsored by the UNSW Gender Audit team, UNHCR, WRC, PLAN and OXFAM as well as the Governments of Australia, the USA, Norway and Canada. This session was very well attended and several States and NGOs made pledges which addressed gender issues.

The other sessions all included some, all be it often cursory, consideration of issues for women and girls, gender equality SGBV and AGD, they were:

1. *Mind the Mind Now: Refugees' Access to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)* (Panel Parity Female: 6 Male: 5)
2. *Advancing Financial Inclusion of Refugees & Host Communities* (Panel Parity Female: 2 Male: 4)
3. *Integrated Responses for Refugees and Migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela* (Panel Parity Female: 1 Male: 5)
4. *Creating Conditions for Voluntary Return and Reintegration* (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 2)
5. *Expanding Access to Tertiary Education and Beyond* (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 11)

Disappointingly, in Spotlight session on Voluntary return, panellists largely ignored the centrality of gender in their discourse on the conditions fundamental for voluntary return and reintegration. The Senior Expert from UN Habitat was the only panellist who mentioned women when highlighting their experiences in accessing land rights. This was in relation to widows having their land confiscated or being evicted when they return to the country of origin. She noted that women were denied access to land allocation processes which governments have established, and that discriminatory barriers had to be removed to enable women to access land. The representative from Pakistan emphasised the importance of developing a reliable database for the verification of information as part of the efforts to building sustainable solutions, and he included gender-based data as an important component of this.

The session on Education was organized by Germany and the panellists were both men and women. UNWomen raised the importance of education for girls and women, but apart from that, gender was hardly mentioned. However, it was included in two of the pledges made.

Women Leaders Lunch, hosted by Kelly Clements, Deputy High Commissioner, UNHCR.

In attendance were Member States, NGOs, INGOS, private sector and three refugee women as the special guests. As the focus of the lunch, the discussion was extremely inclusive of gender equality issues. This included economic inclusion and access to education. Many participants committed to engage relevant stakeholders to increase targeted number of women and girls in educational systems and provide access for refugee women within their national education systems.

Various participants committed to establishing a refugee women's advisory group with a focus on peace and security, to feed into the women, peace and security agenda, and the SGBV and sexual/reproductive rights work streams. The Federal Republic of Germany launched a women's network titled "*Action Network on Forced Displacement- Women as Agents of Change*" that will promote the inclusion of refugee women in both the political and economic spheres. Participants also committed to develop key advocacy tools to promote the recognition of refugee women's skills, providing easier access for refugee women into host community labour markets.

Apajok Biar⁵ stated"

"As a refugee participant it was great to see how different people sitting at the table could all be on the same page about moving forward in the discussion and actions about gender equality. Everyone at the table agreed that we all have a role to play. For example, the USA will continue to support energy and light in camps to prevent gender-based violence, especially towards women when they go out to toilet at night. Ikea committed to continue their support in camps and recognition of women in leadership in camps and described that this has had a very positive impact. The most telling will be seeing how this discussion will move forward. Kelly and UNCHR have committed to continue this discussion and not wait until two years to have this discussion again".

The Closing Plenary

The highlight of the Closing Plenary was the Statement read by four refugee delegates who represented the Global Refugee Led Network, The Global Youth Advisory Council, the Refugee Student Network and the Gender Audit team. The Gender Audit team's contribution is included below on page 10.

Was the work of the Gender Audit Team successful?

The Gender Audit Team believes that it was, and that an important part of this was because of the support of so many fantastic staff at UNHCR Geneva. There were many positive outcomes of the GRF. As researchers who have been working in the field with refugee women and girls, and also in collaboration with colleagues at UNHCR Geneva in policy, program design, consultations and training for over 26 years we are thrilled to see these major steps forward and the committed support from so many inside UNHCR. The Gender Audit team observed that it was encouraging to see the steps already taken towards some very positive pledges, including joint pledges, and innovative discussion about implementation of the GCR over the next 10 years. These came from a wide range of committed stakeholders including States, UN agencies and refugee led networks. However, with several notable exceptions, these are still not strong on recognising the importance of Gender Equality, an effective application of an AGD approach and in addressing the endemic sexual and gender-based violence, of which overwhelming evidence is still emerging from around the world. It is clear that much more work needs to be done!

Following our initial feedback on the outcomes of the Gender Audit, we were delighted to receive the following message from UNHCR's Division of International Protection which sums up the agency's continued commitment and dedication to the cause. Thank you.

⁵ Former refugee from South Sudan and Gender audit team member

“We are pleased to note that the efforts that UNHCR has made with the gender audit team, but also on foregrounding AGD issues, specifically gender equality and sexual and gender-based violence issues, were well noted by many stakeholders. At the GRF, this was done through dedicated spotlight sessions, diverse panels with refugee representation, and the women’s luncheon. ... we collaborated with you and other stakeholders to increase visibility on gender equality issues, and support Member States to make gender sensitive and targeted gender equality related pledges.

We would like to reiterate the High Commissioner’s strong support for gender equality issues, and his continuing commitment to ensuring its progress in all of UNHCR’s work. In UNHCR, we have been progressively working towards ensuring that gender mainstreaming is not just a hollow term, but that it is resulting in positive gender equality outcomes for persons of concern. Towards this, we are working on strengthening institutionalization of gender equality capacity, as well as integrating gender equality into UNHCR’s new results-based management framework. We are also working towards increasing targeted gender equality related work at the operational level. We will also continue to advocate with Member States on inclusion of meaningful gender equality work targeting persons of concern.”

As can be clearly seen, the Gender Audit did keep the issues of women and girls, gender equality and AGD and SGBV high on the agenda of the preparatory meetings and at the GRF. There has been substantial and very positive feedback about the success of the two Spotlight Sessions envisaged and organised with colleagues from a range of stakeholders by the Gender Audit team.

Across the meeting, there was a very positive focus on refugee participation. **While this is welcome, there is still little focus on ensuring that women refugees are meaningfully included at all levels, despite evidence detailing the additional barriers they face and support that they might need to participate meaningfully and not just as “token” women. The (politically - based) failure to address the issues facing the LGBTQI community, even obliquely, are disappointing, given that they have equal status in International law to all other refugees.**

Similarly, while it was pleasing to see an acceptance of the Age Gender and Diversity Framework in many of the pledges and presentations made at the GRF, inclusive discussion of the impact and response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence as a key cross-cutting issue were less evident. They were mainly raised on special panels and by NGOs specialising in protection issues targeting women and girls.

As reported in the brief extracts from the reports of the Preparatory meetings (Annexe 2), there was significant support at each meeting for the representation of refugees at the GRF, and for their inclusion as participants and actors in implementing pledges. It was very satisfying to see that this was carried forward to the GRF in December 2019, and that there was strong refugee representation throughout the event, including many impressive refugee women and girls. However, it must be noted that despite the concerted efforts of many refugee representatives, INGOs and NGOs and UNHCR staff, the participation of women and the additional support sometimes needed for this to happen effectively was not highlighted. A major challenge for the implementation of the commitments to women and girls, gender equality, SGBV and AGD in the GCR will be to ensure that the verbal commitments to women and girls made at the GRF are carried forward into the implementation of the Pledges.

The full impact of the Gender Audit will only be ascertained following a full analysis of the Pledges made to date. It must be noted that while the Gender Audit was commissioned by UNHCR, the reports were not widely circulated, or very easy to find on the GRF website. The Gender Audit team undertook significant additional pro-bono work to ensure that the content of the reports, and recommendations for each sponsorship group were prepared and circulated. These can be found at <https://www.unhcr.org/resources-5cc1a4e94.html> under Further Resources: UNSW Gender Audit.

While there is obvious support for women and girls, gender equality and AGD and an effective response to SGBV within some sections of UNHCR, to be effective it must be a more prominent and targeted and accountable goal of all UNHCR staff, at all levels and in all sections of the organisation. The lack of senior staff with dedicated responsibility for forcibly displaced women and/or Age Gender and Diversity issues is a weak link in the chain of command. Since the loss of Anne Howarth Wiles, the first Senior Co-ordinator for Refugee Women, 1990 – 1996, Rita Reddy, 1996 – 1997, and Joyce Mends-Cole 2000 – 2003 there has not been a senior co-ordinator for forcibly displaced women and girls' issues in UNHCR. We note that previous appointees have at times not had the resources or organisational standing to properly fulfill their brief. We suggest that the appointment of a properly resourced position with recognition and influence across all areas of the organisation would greatly assist the organisational goal of full and meaningful gender mainstreaming.

RECOMMENDATIONS – BASED ON THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS AND THE GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM

A full set of recommendations will be provided by the Gender Audit team based on their analysis of the pledges once they are available. These will include suggestions for a grass roots, refugee focused monitoring and evaluation strategy of the gender related pledges to complement the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to be undertaken by UNHCR.

It is recommended that:

- Funding be sought as a matter of urgency to reinstate the position of Senior Co-ordinator for Refugee Women, Age Gender and Diversity, as a senior position with a high level of organisational standing and clear lines of influence across all divisions. She would need to be supported with adequate staffing and resourcing support and have responsibility for implementing the gender recommendations which come from all parts of the GCR and the GRF.
- The AGD Policy and framework be expanded to include a clear statement that women and girls, gender equality, SGBV and AGD are key cross cuts, intersecting all other diverse groups.
- Training on the specific needs of women and girls, gender equality, SGBV and AGD be mandatory for all UNHCR staff including senior management.
- Building on the work of the Gender Audit team, all pledges be scrutinised for reference to specific actions on women and girls, gender equality and AGD, and in addressing SGBV,

and mapped to develop a roadmap for ensuring that these issues are effectively addressed.

- A modality be developed to rigorously monitor and evaluate the implementation of these commitments and their effectiveness.
- The Gender Audit be continued in all relevant meetings leading to the next major evaluation of the implementation of the GCR, (which we understand to be the Commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Refugee Convention).
- UNHCR consider conducting a Gender Audit at all meetings relevant to the GCR, such as the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement meetings. This would have to include a follow up mechanism, to ensure that the reports are considered and used.
- As part of their evaluation of the GRF, senior UNHCR staff make a strong statement about the position that the organisation will take in relation to women and girls, gender equality, AGD and the prevention and response to SGBV, and develop achievable, non-negotiable policies and programs to address these. This will involve identifying sufficient funding, and providing adequate training for field staff linked to the revised results framework that UNHCR will develop.
- These steps be an integral part of the next stage of the implementation of the GRC, and monitored and evaluated for report back at the 70th anniversary of the Refugee Convention.
- UNHCR continues to advocate for women and girls, gender equality, SGBV and AGD at local, national and international levels and with all Stakeholders.
- The disaggregation of data according to Age, Gender and Diversity must be made a priority across all areas and Sponsorship groups.
- Steps are taken to generate new disaggregated data, and to examine how currently collected disaggregated data that includes an AGD approach can be amended and more widely applied.
- Age, gender, disability and diversity disaggregated data must be collected at all stages of response to the refugee crisis in all six co-sponsorship areas and across all pledges made. This includes a tool to establish need, program design and implementation, through to monitoring the effectiveness of actions taken. An agreed structure and baseline for the collection of AGD data collection and monitoring must be developed for universal usage in the implementation of the GCR. This could be done in conjunction with the World Bank funded data centre and in collaboration with the OECD.
- UNHCR encourages Member States to join them in implementing the strong commitments made in the GCR to women and girls, addressing SGBV, and operationalising all aspects of the UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity (2018).

- Information and materials be made available to Member States explaining the intersectional nature of gender and diversity and the need for good practice to inform the complex webs of challenges experienced by refugees. Solutions which address only one part of the problem usually fail. *(For example, good livelihood programs for women and girls have to take into account lack of sanitary materials, lack of access to education and training, protection from SGBV in transit or in the workplace, freedom from exploitation, skills, and markets, lack of childcare etc)*
- The Digital Platform of Good Practice being developed by UNHCR be fully resourced over a sustained period to provide maximum support to member states and other stakeholders wishing to implement innovative responses to the GCR, and that the portal has a specific section on implementing the AGD Framework, with a focus on women and girls and responding to SGBV.
- UNHCR take a proactive lead in sponsoring and articulating their own Age, Gender and Diversity Framework in all documents relating to the GCR.
- UNHCR review all the pledges and ensure they are AGD sensitive. For example, pledges need to explicitly target closing the gap to ensure equal access to education for girls at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
- The disconnect between realities in the field, and credible evidence-based research with refugee women relating to the continued sexual and gender-based violence which prevents women's participation in all areas, must be recognised and addressed in pledges and discussions relating to the implementation of the GCR. Refugee self-representation, with gender parity should be non-negotiable at all such events.
- Adequate funding, staffing, resources and technical capacity must be identified in order to monitor the implementation of gender related pledges, and the inclusion of gender equality as a cross-cut in all areas. Without the commitment acknowledged through the provision of resources, it is unlikely that many of these pledges will be fulfilled.

The GRF Gender Audit Team

The Global Refugee Forum was documented by Apajok Biar, refugee from South Sudan, resettled to Australia, Hafsar Tameesuddin, a Rohingya refugee from Rakhine State, Burma, resettled to New Zealand, Shaza Al Rihawi, a refugee from Syria, living in Germany, Andrea Ayala, a refugee from El Salvador currently in Europe, Azizah Noor, a Rohingya refugee, Melika Sheikh- Eldin, a refugee from Eritrea, Najeeba Wazefadost, a refugee from Afghanistan resettled to Australia and Rachel Tan, Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network. They were assisted by Nadine Liddy MYAN, Rebecca Eapen, Christine Friis Laustsen and Hanan Tabbara, UNHCR who volunteered to document a number of sessions. The academic input was provided by Dr Linda Bartolomei and Adjunct Professor Eileen Pittaway, UNSW Australia.

The Gender Audit Team made the following presentation at the closing plenary of the Forum:

The Gender Audit team, which includes two academics and nine refugee women from diverse backgrounds, came together because issues relating to women and girls, age, gender and diversity, and sexual and gender-based violence were often not acknowledged at international meetings or included in the meeting reports. We were determined that this would not happen in the Global Compact on Refugees. Drawing on our lived experience and expertise we brought the voices of refugee women and girls in our communities to the meetings. We made presentations,

and produced reports, consistently highlighting the impacts of SGBV and the urgent need for the Age, Gender and Diversity approach to be A VISIBLE TOP PRIORITY.

We are proud to contribute to the strong commitments to all refugee women and girls included in the Global Compact on Refugees. **This however was only the first step.**

The real success of our work will be measured in the number and quality of the pledges made at this Forum to meaningfully include women and girls in all of our diversities and to prioritise addressing the major barriers to gender equality which continue to marginalise and exclude refugee women and girls, most particularly sexual and gender-based violence.

We were proud co-sponsors of the Spotlight sessions on SGBV and AGD and were inspired by the frank discussion and the strong commitments by all key stake-holders; as the Ambassador of Botswana stated, this needs to start by naming the problem- *“Rape is a crime!! It must come out of the shadows.”*

Plan International stated, *“We must look at child and forced marriage as SGBV. It is an institutionalisation of daily rape”.*

However, the USA noted, *‘Prioritising women and girls is still not part of the DNA of emergency responses.’* And we add that DNA must include lesbian, trans and queer women who are also victims from this systematic violence against refugee women.

This is what needs to change and that change needs to start here.

The commitments to women and girls in the GCR need to move from the side lines into the DNA of all pledges made at this forum, to become a major indicator of the forum’s success and of what is monitored going forward. Unless this happens, the rights of refugee women and girls will continue to be condemned to oblivion through the myth of mainstreaming. We have raised our voices, now is the time not only hear us but to **include us.**

Andrea Ayala who read the Statement also announced the launch of a new refugee women-led network, the Global Independent Refugee Women Leaders (GIRWL).

Next Steps

There is an enormous amount of both quantitative and qualitative data which needs to be collated and organised by themes, then rigorously analysed. As noted above, Pledges will be scrutinised to identify those which mention women and girls, gender equality, AGD, SGBV, and the range and specificity of the commitments made. This will be added to the data included in this report, and cross referenced with the gender commitments made in the GCR.

HOW WILL THE COMPREHENSIVE REPORT BE USED?

The analysis of the data will be used to provide a baseline for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of, and whenever possible the effectiveness of the pledges related to women and girls, gender equality, SGBV and AGD over the next 2 two years. **An evaluation report will be presented by members of the audit team at the 70th anniversary commemoration of the Refugee Convention.**

Authors: Linda Bartolomei, Eileen Pittaway, Andrea Ayala, Azizah Noor, Shaza Al Rihawi, Apajok Biar, Hafsar Tameesuddin, Melika Sheikh-Eldin, Rachel Tan, Najeeba Wazefadost, Nadine Liddy,

Annexe 1

Spotlight Sessions on Monday 16th December

Three Spotlight sessions included a central or significant focus on refugee women and girls and the Age, Gender and Diversity Approach:

1. Securing her Future: Proven approaches to ensuring a quality secondary education for refugee girls (Panel Parity Female: 6 Male: 2)
2. Time to Act: taking a proactive approach to reducing maternal and newborn deaths (Panel Parity Female: 6 Male: 3)
3. Engage, Participate, Advocate! Young People and Women Leading (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 2)

Twenty-three sessions included some reference to women and girls, SGBV or the AGD approach:

1. Partnership for addressing forced displacement in Africa (Panel Parity Female: 1 Male: 4)
2. A better life for refugees – a story by IKEA (Panel Parity Female: 1 Male: 3)
3. A Whole of Society Approach to Addressing Displacement in MENA (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 4)
4. Financing Livelihoods and Inclusion in Forced Displacement Contexts (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 3)
5. Financing the education commitments in the global compact on refugees (Panel Parity Female: 6 Male: 2)
6. Energy and Infrastructure Sustainable Energy for Food Security and Nutrition In Refugee And Host Community Settings (Panel Parity Female: 0 Male: 5)
7. Voices of Refugees (Panel Parity Female: 2 Male: 3)
8. Promoting partnerships among diverse stakeholders in supporting national protection capacity and the provision of legal aid services to asylum seekers and refugees (Panel Parity Female: 5 Male: 2)
9. Working together to Facilitate Refugee Self-reliance
10. The Power of TVET - Skills training for sustainable growth (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 2)
11. Using Programming & Financing to Expand Labor Market Access (Panel Parity Female: 2 Male: 4)
12. Measuring the Impact of Hosting, Protecting and Assisting Refugees (Panel Parity Female: 0 Male: 5)
13. Re-framing education in emergencies (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 5)

14. The Whole-of-Society Approach: From Asia Pacific to Africa (Panel Parity Female: 1 Male: 2)
15. Role of German Private Sector in Economic Inclusion (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 2)
16. Journey of a Refugee Athlete (Panel Parity Female: 6 Male: 4)
17. Solutions Realizing Refugee Inclusion with City and Refugee Leaders – (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 5)
18. Partnership Between Civil Society and the Private Sector in Mena (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 2)
19. Building Self-Reliance and Facilitating Refugee Integration in Ethiopia Mena (Panel Parity Female: 1 Male: 4)
20. Including ALL - New Approaches to Financing, Resilience and Sustainability for WaSH (Panel Parity Female: 6 Male: 4)
21. Our Commitment to the 52%: how can we make the Global Compact on Refugees work for every child? (Panel Parity Female: 6 Male: 3)
22. Getting Burden and Responsibility Sharing Right for The GCR (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 5)
23. Achieving Connectivity for Refugees and their Hosting Communities (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 5)

Ten Spotlight sessions were silent were completely silent on the particular needs of women and girls, gender equality and AGD considerations:

1. Innovations Across the Refugee Resettlement Journey (Panel Parity Female: 2 Male: 3)
2. The Role of Islamic Financial Institutions (Panel Parity Female: 0 Male: 5)
3. Improving the Refugee Response Through Evidence (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 5)
4. Improving Teacher Support in Crisis Contexts (Panel Parity Female: 2 Male: 3)
5. Innovations for Refugee Livelihoods: SGD Impact Accelerator (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 6)
6. (Melika check this one)
7. Bright Futures: The Promise of Early Childhood Development in Crisis Settings ((with the exception a very welcome intervention by PLAN to announce 3 pledges related to Gender and Education) (Panel Parity Female: 7 Male: 1)
8. Refugee Sponsorship: Building Communities Through Partnership (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 8)
9. Launching the Asylum Capacity Support Group (ACSG) Mechanism (Panel Parity Female: 3 Male: 4)
10. The Syrian Refugee Crisis – Delivering in Partnership (Panel Parity Female: 4 Male: 3)

Annexe 2

Summary of discussion relating to Age Gender and Diversity, and SGBV in the Global Refugee Forum Preparatory meetings and the UNHCR-NGO Consultations.

First GRF Preparatory Meeting, March 29, 2019

Gender equality concerns were clearly addressed by some speakers on the Panels, including chairs and in some interventions from the floor. Notably, the importance of clearly recognising the gender equality dimensions of protection and the Age, Gender and Diversity approach was emphasised by UNHCR. Several State and civil society representatives made strong interventions, which highlighted needs of women and girls and called for a strong focus on women and girls, gender equality, SGBV and an AGD Approach. Youth and women from refugee backgrounds participated in the sessions and called for Gender Equality and AGD, in addition to women's involvement in peace building. On a negative note, women speakers were significantly under-represented on the formal panels.

Second GRF Preparatory Meeting, June 25, 2019

There was very positive momentum from UNHCR, many States and NGOs towards the implementation of the GCR and a genuine commitment for change. Then Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Volker Turk's very strong leadership certainly contributed to this. With reference to the planned Global Refugee Forum, he stated "*The spirit of the event must be visionary and action orientated.*"

Interventions from many country representatives noted areas of interest for co-sponsorship, and detailed sub themes, all of which could have a strong AGD component, but their interventions did not directly address this. Others noted that while their governments were considering areas of interest, they were not yet ready to commit. Of specific note was a lack of mention of gender disaggregated data collection, which is key to most of the activities/areas proposed. This was despite a strong focus on this as part of the discussion on Indicators at the First Preparatory meeting.

While the AGD Framework was mentioned, this was not unpacked to explore what it would actually mean in practice. With the exception of the side event on AGD, the specific but often very different experiences and needs of refugee women and girls, men and boys were neither analysed nor discussed.

When gender or sexual and gender-based violence were mentioned they were more often than not subsumed as acronyms, (AGD and SGBV) and the acronyms not spelled out. This renders women and girls invisible and the horror of sexual and gender-based violence is reduced to four quickly spoken letters.

In all meetings there was a very strong consensus on the importance of refugee participation from the local level through to decision making at the very highest levels. This included participation in education, livelihoods programs, access to health care services, and to advocacy opportunities. It specified inclusion in all decision making and planning meetings. A key point made by several speakers was that participation must be real, not tokenistic, and to achieve this, refugees will need support and resources. Genuine and meaningful refugee participation was the most prominent theme across the day and in every session. Positive statements supporting women and girls and embedding an AGD approach through the process were made.

While these issues were raised strongly by NGOs, refugee women, UNHCR staff, and some Member States, overall, the response was disappointing by comparison with the strong support for

action on SGBV and on commitments to refugee women and girls during the 75th Standing Committee meeting held the previous week.

Third GRF Preparatory Meeting, November 2019

The Gender Audit team observed that it was encouraging to see the steps already taken towards some very positive pledges, including joint pledges, and innovative discussion about implementations of the GCR over the next 10 years. These came from a wide range of committed stakeholders including States, UN agencies and Refugee led networks. However these were still not strong on recognising the importance of gender, an effective application of an age gender and diversity approach or on addressing the endemic sexual and gender based violence, of which overwhelming evidence is still emerging from around the world. UNHCR colleagues and the chairs of the sessions did not raise gender issues, unless responding to interventions from the floor.

There was a very positive focus on refugee participation. While this is welcome, there was still little focus on ensuring that women refugees are included, despite evidence detailing the additional barriers they face and support that they might need to participate meaningfully and not just as “token” women. Once again, the (politically - based) failure to address the issues facing the LGBTQI community, even obliquely, was disappointing.

Gender Audit Report, NGO Consultations, July 3 – 5 2019

Overall, the recognition and inclusion of gender, an acknowledgement of the specific needs of women and girls and the need to prevent, mitigate and respond to sexual and gender -based violence (SGBV) was strong and consistent through many of the sessions. It was clear that with strong support from ICVA, the majority of the NGO community was taking this very seriously, and many committed to continue with strong advocacy to Member States.

The team was also very encouraged to hear strong support from so many of the UNHCR colleagues. However, there were times when lack of an AGD perspective in the panel presentations and discussions was extremely disappointing, and these omissions occurred both from NGO participants, panel presenters and UNHCR representatives. Of the six plenary sessions over the three days, only three made strong references to women and girls, and when it did occur it was often mainly in response to Pigeonhole questions. There were only two brief references to gender in the opening plenary session. Despite a strong presentation in which ICVA emphasised the importance of an AGD Framework, neither the High Commissioner nor the NGO moderator mentioned Gender, AGD, or SGBV. They did however speak strongly about the need for refugee participation.

Overall, there was a positive focus on gender issues, and on the importance of an AGD approach in many sessions. Of the 20 Thematic panels, 10 included a significant or very strong focus on women and girls, gender equality and AGD, SGBV and the particular concerns of women and girls. It was therefore particularly disappointing to see that the otherwise excellent verbal report from the NGO Rapporteur included no references to gender, women and girls or to the AGD approach. With the exception of a reference to the importance of including ‘the prevention of sexual abuse and harassment for all staff and refugees in all codes of conduct’ it included no further mention of the critical issues of recognising and addressing SGBV in all aspects of refugee women, men and children’s lives, despite this being discussed in several sessions. Once again this highlighted the need for a Gender audit to fully report the content and discussion in each session and in each meeting.

For Reports of Gender Audit of the Thematic Meetings for the GCR: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/events/conferences/5a251b537/gender-audit-report-second-third-thematic-discussions-global-compact-refugees.html>, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/events/conferences/5a33d80e7/gender->

[audit-report-fourth-fifth-thematic-discussions-global-compact-refugees.html](https://www.unhcr.org/5a745f187.pdf),
<https://www.unhcr.org/5a745f187.pdf>

For Reports of the Gender Audit of the preparatory meetings for the GRF see:

<https://www.unhcr.org/events/conferences/5d88a9f74/gender-audit-first-preparatory-meeting-global-refugee-forum.html>, <https://www.unhcr.org/5d88ab6e7.pdf>,
<https://www.unhcr.org/5deeea757.pdf> <https://www.unhcr.org/5d974f694.pdf>

Glossary of Acronyms

AGD - Age, Gender and Diversity

ANCORW – Australian National Committee on Refugee Women

EU – European Union

GCR – Global Compact on Refugees

GIRWL - Global Independent Refugee Women Leaders

GRF - Global Refugee Forum

GRN – Global Refugee Network

LGBTQI – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex

MENA – Middle East and North Africa (Bureau, UNHCR)

MHPSS – Mental Health and Psychological Support (UNHCR)

MYAN – Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (Australia)

MIRPS - Spanish acronym for the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework

NGO – Non Government organisation

OECD - The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OXFAM – Oxford Committee for Famine Relief

PLAN – PLAN International (INGO)

SGBV – Sexual and Gender Based Violence

UN – United Nations

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNSW – University of new South Wales

USA – United States of America

WaSH – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

WRC – Women’s Refugee Commission