

## Gender Audit of the 2020 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Protection and Resilience during Pandemics

### What is the purpose of a Gender Audit?

Increasingly, the different experiences of forcibly displaced women and girls, men and boys have been acknowledged by humanitarian, peace and development actors and important steps have been taken to ensure that the needs of all forcibly displaced people are addressed. Gender mainstreaming has been adopted as an important global strategy to integrate the concerns and experiences of women and men in policy and practice. In line with these developments, the UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Policy of 2018 requires that an age, gender and diversity approach is applied to all aspects of UNHCR's work. Despite these major steps forward, unless it is carefully monitored, gender issues often "fall of the table" and are missed from debates and formal meeting reports. The assumption that gender issues are covered by "mainstreaming" often fails to acknowledge the important differences between men and women. The purpose of the gender audit is to monitor discussions and meeting reports to ensure that the often rich and innovative discussion about gender issues is included in the documents and meeting outcomes. If it is not raised, then the omission is on record as an "aide-memoire" for future meetings.

### Why a gender audit of the HC's Dialogue?

The High Commissioner's 2020 Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Protection and Resilience during Pandemics will focus on the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the protection and resilience of refugees and people who are internally displaced or stateless and their host communities. During the Dialogue participants will reflect upon how the protection landscape has changed, and how to address the pressing protection, resilience and solutions questions that have emerged, building upon the international refugee protection regime and principles and arrangements set out in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

The COVID-19 pandemic has proven to have a significant gendered impact with forcibly displaced women and girls often being especially at risk due to burdensome caregiving responsibilities, precarious jobs in the informal sector, livelihood and educational disruptions and increased risk of gender-based violence in all aspects of their lives. The focus of the 2020 High Commissioner's Dialogue provides an important opportunity to bring attention to the gendered impact of the pandemic and ensure gender equality considerations and GCR provisions related to women and girls are reflected in the thematic discussions of the Dialogue.

### Building on experience from previous gender audits

In 2017 a gender audit was carried out of the thematic consultations leading to the drafting of the GCR, including the 2017 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Towards a Global Compact on Refugees, and contributed to the strong focus on the specific needs of women and girls in the 2018 Compact. In 2019 a second gender audit covered the first-ever Global Refugee Forum (GRF) held in Geneva, and the preparatory processes leading up to it, including the 2019 NGO consultations. This gender audit drew attention to gender-equality related challenges in refugee contexts and focused on ensuring that the commitments made to refugee women and girls in the GCR were acknowledged and integrated through the GRF pledging process, as well as in the identification of good practices. The gender audit team documented the way gender equality; age, gender and diversity; and GBV were addressed by different stakeholders across key GRF thematic areas. The audit team also provided specific recommendations on how to ensure effective implementation and monitoring of pledges. Both

gender audits were undertaken by a group of refugee women representing different regions with academic guidance from Professor Eileen Pittaway and Dr Linda Bartolomei from the University of New South Wales.

The 2020 gender audit of the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protections Challenges: Protection and Resilience during Pandemics will build on these two previous audits and will focus on bringing attention to gender equality and the GCR provisions related to women and girls in the thematic discussions and outcomes of the 2020 dialogue. Like the previous audits, the 2020 gender audit will be undertaken by a group of forcibly displaced women.

### Gender audit methodology and expected outcomes

The High Commissioners Dialogue provides the first major opportunity to gauge how well the gender commitments made in the GCR and the GRF pledges have been applied in the field, in particular in the response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

#### The objectives of the gender audit are

- To ensure that the discussion of gender issues and examples of good and effective practice in the High Commissioner's Dialogue are accurately recorded and included in the formal meeting procedures.
- To cross-reference the discussion, reported responses to COVID-19, and potential future actions to the gender commitments agreed to by member states in the GCR, and pledges made in the GRF process.
- To analyze the impact of the previous gender audits outcomes on the COVID-19 response, and future commitments to the AGD Policy framework.

#### Methodology

As in previous audits, the team will document each session of the High Commissioner's Dialogue against a complex framework which allows a rich analysis of the discussions (or omissions), the particular issues which arise in each topic area, and further commitments made. They will note the different responses of key stakeholders, and any gaps which they perceive in the discussion. The women from a forcibly displaced background will bring their lived experience and work with refugee communities together to frame questions and make contributions via the "Chat" facility in the virtual meetings. They will also analyze each session from the perspective of their joint experience. A short report will be circulated following each of the four virtual meetings of the High Commissioner's Dialogue and following the "Hybrid" meeting. A consolidated report of the 2020 dialogue meetings will be prepared by the end of the year, and the more in-depth analysis and cross reference with other key documents will be available early 2021.

#### The Audit Team

The audit team will once again be convened by Eileen Pittaway and Linda Bartolomei. They have brought together a group of 7 women from forcibly displaced backgrounds, who have worked on the previous gender audits and co-authored the reports. The women come from five different regions and represent a wide range of age and diverse groups. They bring expertise and experience across each of the key issues to be considered in the High Commissioner's Dialogue, and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Reports from the previous gender audits are available [here](#) on the UNHCR website.**