



# **Combined Gender Audit Report of the Five meetings comprising the 2020 High Commissioners Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Protection and Resilience during pandemics and the 2020 NGO Consultations.**

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## **SUMMARY**

### **FROM GENDER SENSITIVE TO GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE**

**A major step forward for women, girls, and diverse groups included under the umbrella of Age, Gender and Diversity.**

In 2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the High Commissioner's Dialogue was comprised of five virtual meetings, over a period of two months. The gender audit team covered each event and submitted a short report prior to the next meeting. (Annexes 4 -8). This report pulls together and analyses the findings from all five.

Because of the restrictions caused by COVID-19, the virtual format cannot directly compare to previous meetings. However, while the interactive nature of face-to-face meetings was missing, one advantage of the virtual format was that people from around the world were able to participate, both as panellists and as audience, and questions could be submitted via the web. Many of those posted in advance were answered during the sessions by the panellists. UNHCR must be congratulated for their organisation and the prompt and thorough responses to the majority of questions posted on the Zoom Q and A during the session.

There was gender parity on panels and across the Dialogue. Refugees were treated with respect and invited to contribute their analysis and recommendations, not just to share sad stories. The refugee presenters demonstrated a sophisticated analysis of the problems facing refugee communities, and of the possible solutions. They also discussed the power of community to address problems. We applaud the very strong role taken by some chairs who asked pertinent questions to ensure that the sessions were gender inclusive.

The opening session provided a comprehensive framework of Inclusion and Solidarity in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic for the High Commissioner's Dialogue (HCD), 2020. In his opening address, Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees spoke strongly about what he hoped the meeting would achieve for refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons<sup>1</sup> and his commitment to ensure that a gender lens and analysis was applied throughout the Dialogue.

What was outstanding in four of the five sessions of the HCD 2020 and the UNHCR NGO Consultations was the very strong leadership on Gender and AGD from UNHCR senior staff. Of particular note was the clear articulation of the need to move from a "Gender Inclusive" approach to a "Gender Transformative" approach and a clear articulation of the rights of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Communities to be included as equals.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the report, as across the HCD, the term refugees is most often used. This should be understood as including all persons of concern to UNHCR including Refugee, internally displaced and stateless populations.

We congratulate High Commissioner Filippo Grandi, Assistant High Commissioner Gillian Triggs, Deputy High Commissioner Kelly Clements, and Mr Andrew Harper, special advisor on Climate Action for their frank analysis of gender and SGBV as central to the debate. While speaking specifically to Climate action, the contributions made by Andrew are equally relevant to challenges across the board. Framed in the context of the importance of trust to achieve our collective goals, they acknowledged the rise in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during COVID-19, and its impacts, including an increase in “being forced to sell or exchange sex”,, and the imperative to address these issues.

The strong recognition of the role played in the response to the pandemic by refugee-led organisations, in particular women-led organisations and the need to provide both space, resources and support was clearly spelled out. The imperative to prevent, mitigate and respond effectively to SGBV was seen as a key to gender equality. The meaningful participation of women and girls at the decision-making table, and the inclusion of LGBTI communities was seen as critical as we move forward. To achieve this, we were challenged to develop frameworks which provide legitimacy and validity for these organisations, and the refugee representatives whose voices and activities are making such a difference. The High Commissioner summarised by requesting that we do not politicise the response to refugees, IDPs and people on the move and called on the international community to work collectively to develop inclusive responses. In a strong statement which reiterated the legal rights of refugees, Ms Gillian Triggs, Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, stated that a gender lens must be applied to the collective work of all stakeholders. The strong message across all the sessions was that we must learn lessons from what is happening now in the pandemic and take that learning into the future. Many speakers also emphasised the need to acknowledge that given the opportunity, refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons<sup>2</sup> are assets, not burdens, highlighting the important role that they have played as first responders during the pandemic.

In terms of lessons learned from the current pandemic, and from responses to climate change to date, it was obvious that refugee women and girls have a critical role to play in the response. This ranges from the power of women and girls as “first responders”, the effectiveness of refugee-led organisations, in particular women-led, the value of traditional skills and knowledge, often carried mainly by women, and the professional roles that women can play both in their own, but also in host communities. It was also acknowledged that women and girls often bear the brunt of catastrophic events and, that with adequate and appropriate support, they themselves are the most appropriate people to address these.

#### **HOWEVER**

It must be noted that while the material presented in this report was collected in the context of a meeting focusing on pandemics and Climate Change, the findings relating to Gender Inclusion apply to all situations where people are forced to flee or become stateless.

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout the report and the High Commissioner’s Dialogue while the term refugee is most often used, it should be read as inclusive of all persons of concern to UNHCR including Refugee, Internally Displaced and Stateless populations.

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## BACKGROUND TO THE GENDER AUDIT PROCESS

The Gender Audit of the meetings related to the drafting of the Global Compact on Refugees and its implementation began in 2017. Its genesis was the desire to follow up on decades of research and advocacy by Eileen Pittaway and Linda Bartolomei on the distinct needs of refugee women and girls, in particular the major rights abuse of Sexual and Gender based Violence (SGBV) and the barriers to protection and participation they face. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (NYD)(2016) laid out a new vision for the protection of refugees and migrants and included exceptionally strong recognition of gender issues. UNHCR was tasked to build on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) outlined in Annex 1 of the NYD in order to develop a Global Compact on Refugees to be adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2018. The aim of the first Gender Audit in 2017 was to ensure that the strong gender commitments outlined in the NYD, but less clearly articulated the CRRF, were fully integrated across the new Global Compact on Refugees. Commissioned and funded by UNHCR's Division of International Protection (Gender Equality and SGBV Units), a team came together, including five women from refugee backgrounds resettled to developed countries from the five UN designated regions of the world. The team was selected based on their strong commitment to gender equality, familiarity with the UN system and the UNHCR policy context, as well as their rich lived experience.

Over the course of three years, the Gender Audit Team has grown to include ten core members. They are Shaza Al Rihawi, Andrea Ayala, Noor Azizah, Linda Bartolomei, Apajok Biar, Tina Dixon, Eileen Pittaway, Melika Sheik-Eldin, Hafsar Tameesuddin and Najeeba Wazefadost. Many others volunteered<sup>3</sup> to assist and participated in key meetings including the UNHCR/NGO consultations, 2018-2020, the Consultations on the GCR, 2018, and the Global Refugee Forum, 2019, and the 2020 High Commissioners Dialogue (HCD). These women document the meetings, draft interventions, present on panels, analyse content and are co-authors of the reports.

## THE AIM OF THE GENDER AUDIT OF THE HCD 2020

The aim of the 2020 HCD was to examine the protection challenges faced by refugee populations during the COVID-19 pandemic and responses to these, and to look at lessons learned from those to prepare for future pandemics, and emerging catastrophic events such as those caused by Climate Change. The aim of the Gender Audit was to document and analyse content relating to women and girls, sexual and gender-based violence, gender and diversity. The 2020 Gender audit employed six refugee women representing the five UN regions, working with two academics from UNSW Australia, to undertake the audit process. The five sessions were:

- **The Opening Session, October 21<sup>st</sup>**, set the framework for discussion and the aims of the meeting. The inclusion of 6 refugees, 3 women and 3 men on the opening panel and the strong lead on Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) set by the High Commissioner, paved the way for an excellent dialogue from the gender perspective.
- **Protection Considerations, November 4<sup>th</sup>** focused on Age, Gender and Diversity. All major concerns were raised, and the value of embracing an AGD approach was clearly articulated. Many examples of good practice were presented as examples of positive ways to implement the AGD Framework and Policy.
- **Resilience and Inclusion with a focus on health November 18<sup>th</sup>**. This could have been an excellent session with some strong examples of good practice, BUT it was largely gender blind and missed the important gender aspects of health provision and the impacts of not responding to these (as highlighted in UNHCR's Global Public Health Strategy).

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<sup>3</sup> Particular thanks to Charlotte Bell, Geraldine Doney, Effie Mitchell, Jasmine Shamim and Rachel Tan, who all provided essential support to the Gender Audit team at, or for key meetings over the past four years.

- **Climate Action, December 2<sup>nd</sup>.** An outstanding session, which clearly demonstrated the critical importance of including women in all aspects of a climate response. Most importantly, this session highlighted the need to move from a “Gender Inclusive” approach to a “Gender Transformative” approach.
- **Reflections on outcomes of the virtual dialogues and the way forward December 9<sup>th</sup>.** An extremely interesting session with 27 presenters and chairs. However, the majority of the presentations were gender blind. Those who did speak of Age, Gender and Diversity issues, including UNHCR senior staff, were exceptional and carried the session.

Although not formally audited, some observations and recommendations from the 2020 UNHCR Annual Consultations with NGOs, which had very similar aims, are also included in the analysis. The gender content of these meetings was very high and of extremely good quality, which has made a very useful contribution to the analysis, recommendations, and examples of good practice. Thanks go to the UNHCR Partnership Section and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) for the high quality of the sessions.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF GENDER INCLUSION IN THE 2020 HIGH COMMISSIONER’S DIALOGUE: QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA**

The gender related issues discussed have been thematically analysed and are broadly grouped under the major themes of: Economic issues; the Inclusion and Empowerment of women and girl; Groups covered by the AGD Framework, with a strong focus on LGBTI Communities and girls; the importance of Education; Sexual and Gender Based Violence; and Health. Each of these thematic areas includes a number of sub-themes. As the issues identified are intersectional, many could be posted in several or all of the thematic areas. However, they have generally been allocated under the sub-theme which reflects the context in which the issue was discussed. For example, if SGBV and poverty were mentioned in the context of education it is noted as Education. Some presenters made key points about a number of different gender related issues across the course of the sessions. This clearly demonstrates that no one single issue can stand alone, and that an intersectional response is needed. Because of the cross-cutting nature of much of the discussion, the numbers of gender related interventions presented are indicative rather than absolute, but provide a comprehensive picture of the gender content of the 2020 HCD. If the same person has made a number of statements about the same issues, but in very different contexts they have been included as separate interventions. Much of the discussion was equally important for men, women and non-binary people. However, as discussed above/below, a key issue in the analysis is the importance of differences being identified and addressed. Given the very different format of these meetings the questions and comments recorded from the Zoom Q and A have been presented in separate column. While most received an online response from UNHCR, only a very small number of these questions were directly addressed by the presenters in the meetings.

**TABLE 1: KEY GENDER RELATED TRENDS AND ISSUES RAISED ACROSS THE SESSIONS IN THE HIGH COMMISSIONER’S DIALOGUE, INDICATING THE FREQUENCY IN WHICH THEY WERE ADDRESSED**

For full details on each mention see Matrices at Annexes 1 and 2

<b>GENDER THEMES AND SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>HCD SESSIONS NUMBER OF MENTIONS</b>	<b>ZOOM Q AND A NUMBER OF MENTIONS*</b>
<b>THEME 1: ECONOMIC ISSUES AND POVERTY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS</b>		
The economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls	11 mentions	2 mentions (GAT =1)
Safe Livelihoods	2 mentions	1 mention (GAT =1)
<b>THEME 2: THE EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS</b>		
The need for Gender Transformative approaches	2 mentions	3 mentions (GAT =2)
Gender Equality	4 mentions	5 mentions (GAT =2)
The importance of refugee-led organisations	6 mentions	6 mentions (GAT =1)
The importance of Inclusion, (macro and micro)	12 mentions	5 mentions (GAT =3)
Refugee Women as first responders, COVID-19 and Climate change	4 mentions	1 mention (GAT =1)
<b>THEME 3: GROUPS COVERED BY THE AGE GENDER AND DIVERSITY POLICY</b>		
Age, Gender and Diversity policy, (also modelled by composition of panels)	2 mentions	5 mentions (GAT =3)
Intersectionality of barriers for women	1 mention	
Problems facing LGBTI communities	13 mentions	4 mentions (GAT =2)
Older people	2 mentions	1 mention
Women with a disability	7 mentions	1 mention
<b>THEME 4: THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION</b>		
Lack of access to education	5 mentions	2 mention (GAT =1)
Access to Technology for women and girls	10 mentions	3 mentions (GAT =2)
Need for good information and Training for women and girls	4 mentions	1 mention
<b>THEME 5: SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE</b>		
Vulnerability to early/child/forced marriage	4 mentions	1 mention (GAT = 1)
Exploitation of women and girls	2 mentions	2 mentions
Shelter for victims of SGBV	5 mentions	0 mention
Engaging men and boys to stop GBV	1 mention	2 mentions
Poverty and SGBV	10 mentions	2 mentions (GAT = 1)
Access to Justice for women victims of SGBV	3 mentions	1 mention
<b>THEME 6: HEALTH ISSUES</b>		
Reproductive Health Care	6 mentions	1 mention (GAT = 1)
Increased psycho-social support for both refugees and frontline workers	2 mentions	1 mention
Urgent COVID-19 vaccination for women and children	2 mentions	0 mentions
Health needs of youth	2 mentions	1 mention

*\*Column 3 includes details of how many mentions in the Q and A were from the Gender Audit Team (GAT)*

In Total Gender related issues were raised verbally 122 times over the five meetings. What was noted by the gender audit team was the high quality of many of these interventions, including strong recommendations and example of good practices.

Of the 54 gender related questions posted on Zoom, 22 were raised by members of the Gender Audit Team (GAT), which indicates a low level of engagement with gender issues from other “attendees”. Only

22 Statements were submitted over the course of the five meetings, and of those only 10 referred to gender. This was very disappointing, in particular in contrast to the high level of gender inclusion by many presenters and session chairs. It could be a reflection of the “virtual” nature of the meetings, and recommendations are made in the analysis of procedure, below which might address this in the future.

## **ANALYSIS OF THE SIX THEMATIC AREAS**

The presentations and debate highlighted the intersectional nature of the COVID-19 related problems experienced between the groups incorporated under the umbrella of age, gender and diversity, although the excellent UNHCR AGD Policy was seldom directly referenced. As the table above demonstrates, the range of issues discussed included the economic impacts on education, loss of livelihoods, inability to access health care and medicines, loss of opportunities to access income, shortages of food and other basics, lack of access to justice and the increase in Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV). These problems are amplified by and further contribute to xenophobia, racism and discrimination, based at times on a fear that refugee communities are carriers of COVID-19. The intersection meant that it was often impossible to discuss issues and the AGD impacts in silos, and the intersects are reflected in multiple areas of discussion. SGBV was widely noted as a key cause of concern in five of the six sessions, intersecting almost all aspects of the response to COVID-19 and future responses to refugees. In addition to the many barriers and challenges discussed, there was also a strong recognition of the key role that refugee and displaced persons and their community-based organisations, and in particular women-led organisations, have played and continue to play in mitigating the worst impacts of the pandemic. Across all of the meetings, examples of good practice were shared and recommendations for ways in which the leadership, capacity and strengths of refugee women and women-led organisations could be further resourced and supported. The key findings related to Gender Inclusion for each of the six major themes are presented in the following section.

### **THEME 1: ECONOMIC ISSUES AND POVERTY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS**

**The economic impact of COVID-19** and the terrible public poverty it is causing was widely discussed. The High Commissioner described how it is impacting on refugees more than on other sectors of the community, and that refugee women and girls are the most vulnerable to this outcome of the pandemic. They suffer the dual impact of loss of access to livelihoods and greatly increased risks of domestic and family violence exacerbated by the extreme economic insecurity. The often-overlooked need for hygiene products as part of the protection needs of the most vulnerable was raised in the context of a comprehensive response to poverty.

**Livelihoods and Income** Access to income was identified as the key to alleviating the poverty which is a critical part of the suffering caused by the pandemic, and as noted this strongly impacts on women and their children. There is a great need for training, resources and opportunities for women and girls to enable them to access livelihoods. Without this they may be forced into selling or exchanging sex, and other forms of exploitative employment because they have no other choice. It is also essential that we not just provide training for women, but also employment once they are trained. There was positive discussion about the importance of work as a tool of empowerment and a way of assisting one’s own community and benefiting host communities: for example, by employing refugees with the relevant skills and qualifications to fill gaps in the labour market. Not only being involved but having something to contribute gave meaning to life. For example, while not articulating gender related issues, Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Dr Fezzeh Hosseini and Dr Carmen Parra demonstrated the strength and value of women’s work and the contributions they make when they discussed the important roles they are playing both in their own refugee communities, but also in the host communities in which they live.

### **THEME 2: THE EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS**

**That Gender Equality** is essential in order to address the challenges we are facing, both now and into the future. The imperative of moving the debate away from “Gender sensitive”, and on to “Gender



transformative". This involves addressing the root causes of gender inequality and recognizing the way in which gender inequality intersects with, and is compounded by, other forms of discrimination.

**The importance of women-led refugee groups and CBOs.** COVID-19 has taught us that UNHCR cannot do it alone. UNHCR and many major INGOs are working to decentralize their work to get more resources and funding to local NGOs, more funding to local host communities and to establish systems ensuring that refugee women, in their diversity, are participants and decision makers in this process. The World Bank is supporting this move.

**The need for inclusion of both women and men refugees at a macro and a micro level.** The High Commissioner spoke passionately on the need for inclusion. He stated that if we work in isolation it is a violation of people's rights. Exclusion is negative and marginalising. It can result in xenophobia against refugees. The slogan "No-one Left Behind" encapsulates the spirit of the HCD. This means that all women MUST be at the table, that resilience cannot be prioritized for affluent, developed nations or for men only. NO ONE [including women] can be left behind. To achieve this, we must end top-down patriarchal approaches and empower those in the centre of the emergencies. We must recognise the importance of investing in refugees and ensure that women are at the centre of decision-making. Equally important is that refugees must be included in host communities, not only as recipients of aid, but as contributors to the host communities, using the skills and knowledge they bring with them to benefit all.

**That women and girls must be included at every level of decision making and every action taken.**

All participants emphasized inclusion as a key goal and "inclusion" was used to guarantee a place for women at the table, as well as the inclusion of refugees into national strategies and mechanisms. It was noted that you cannot build a resilient system without an inclusive and participatory process for those who are affected. Voices that have never been heard before must now be heard in a genuinely empowering process. This means not just counting the numbers of women or young people we have on panels but ensuring that they are genuinely and proactively involved and listened to. Refugees want to *be supporters* rather than *recipients* of aid. Being involved [in solutions] put refugees on the same level as everyone else, and that the thought of equality is powerful, positive and empowering. We also need transparent consultations between refugee communities, including all women and girls, NGOs, INGOs, CBOs, civil society and donors to inform the decision-making process.

### **THEME 3: GROUPS COVERED BY THE AGE GENDER AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

**The full inclusion of the LGBTI community and acknowledgement of their human rights.** Of note is that two representatives of member states, Ecuador and Fiji, spoke strongly about the rights of LGBTI communities, as did the High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi. Congratulations must be extended to the Government of Ecuador for the inclusion of sex and gender identity in all documents relating to refugees and asylum seekers, and their extremely positive approach to real inclusion. Nazhat Shameem Khan the ambassador for Fiji was the first panellist in the HCD to openly and inclusively refer to the LGBTI community and include them in her presentation as an absolute norm. This is a major step forward, and an excellent example of best practice. Across the meetings only four other panellists addressed this issue.

**The incredibly high levels of SGBV experienced by women and girls with a disability was highlighted.** Key problems mentioned were the difficulties that people with disabilities have in accessing information: for example, without a signer, people with a hearing disability do not receive information. Women and girls with a disability are usually at the bottom of the social hierarchy in any society and are denied access to many essential services, not able to seek protection. There is a need for safe houses, counselling services, livelihoods, technical training and a focus on hygiene needs specifically tailored to women and girls with a disability.

The importance of acknowledging the **strength and resilience of older refugees** and their capacity to contribute significantly to their own and the host communities.

Please note, however, that, while there were quite a few references to groups included in the AGD Framework, very few referenced gender differences, which means that many of the problems experienced by the groups go unacknowledged and unaddressed.

## **THEME 4: THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION**

**The importance of access to education.** The compounding impact of COVID-19 on access to education by girls was raised by many speakers. They are the most likely to be denied education and this makes them vulnerable to many forms of SGBV including early marriage, early childbirth and exploitation. UNHCR's most recent education report states that 48% of refugee children are out of school today. Girls are half as likely as boys to be enrolled at the secondary level and, in all likelihood 50% of refugee girls may never return to school. It was noted that scholarships are needed not just for young women but also for adults to raise the standard of education across refugee communities.

**Access to Technology.** The need for digital literacy skills and access to technology for women and girls was widely discussed both as an educational tool, but also as a way of disseminating information to prevent and respond to SGBV. While many excellent examples of this happening were discussed, it was tempered by the fact that so few refugees have access to technology or can afford internet data. This has to be addressed if the advantages can be widely utilised. However, we must also account for the fact that many older refugees do not have access to technology and in fact are afraid of it. They need accessible information on paper and, if possible, via the TV or radio.

## **THEME 5: SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

**There was strong acknowledgment of the increase of SGBV during the pandemic**, including forced and early marriage exacerbated by poverty, quarantining in crowded shelters, and a curtailment of services. Members of the LGBTI communities are often isolated in those same communities who routinely abuse them. An important contribution to the debate was a focus on gender inequality and naming it as a major cause of SGBV. The High Commissioner noted that the pandemic has become a driver of violence, especially against women and girls and members of LGBTI communities. Gillian Triggs spoke of the shocking fact that since the beginning of the pandemic across the world, UNHCR GBV Hotlines had been overwhelmed with calls for assistance. It is referred to as a shadow pandemic.

Other specific issues raised were the need to support girls who had been raped, who are sometimes pregnant or forced into marriage, to provide them access to reproductive healthcare, mental health services, to allow them to return to school, to be included in safety nets and not to be shamed. The need for access to justice for women and girls who were victims of SGBV and the end to impunity for perpetrators was discussed. Equal access to livelihoods and income support for all women was also identified as a key part of any prevention response. Once again, the importance of including refugees in national systems was identified as a key strategy to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.

The High Commissioner challenged the humanitarian/development sector to better target their activities to prevent and respond to gender-based violence including the increased use of cash to alleviate poverty. He requested that all organizations budget and program for these responses. He talked of the importance of safe spaces for women and girls, and members of LGBTI communities who suffer abuse. The need for the humanitarian sector to work closely with community-based organisations, refugee-led and LGBTI-led, was discussed by several presenters.

## **THEME 6: HEALTH ISSUES**

While the Session on Health and resilience was largely gender silent, several issues were discussed which apply equally to women and men. These included the critically important need for donors to support host states with fragile economies to address the health needs of their own communities **and include refugees in national health care and social insurance systems**. There were also two mentions of the importance of providing **access to reproductive healthcare** for both refugees and the host community and one mention of **providing COVID-19 vaccinations to women with underlying health concerns**. However, a number of Gendered Health issues were raised by speakers in several of the other sessions. In the session on Protection, the importance of access to psychosocial support was highlighted and in the Climate session, the importance of refugee women and girls having access to health care at all times.

## ZOOM Q AND A

The Q and A function in Zoom was used effectively across all sessions by many meeting participants to ask questions, raise issues of concern and to share good practices. Across the five sessions a total of 179 questions/comments were posted and of these less than one third (49) were gendered. It is also important to note that of the 49 gendered questions, 29 were posted by the Gender Audit team. This demonstrates the very important role played by the Audit team in highlighting the AGD aspects of each of the key issues and also provided UNHCR with the opportunity to highlight current responses and good gender practices. As presented in the table above, all gendered questions were compiled and analysed under the six thematic areas. The analysis of these questions further highlights the intersectional nature of the age, gender and diversity issues raised, with SGBV again featuring as a cross-cutting issue across all sessions. For example, in the Opening session a question posed by the Gender Audit team highlighted the intersection between loss of livelihoods, confinement in overcrowded housing and increased domestic violence in the context of COVID-19. In the Protection Session several examples of good practice responses to address SGBV in the context of the COVID-19 emergency response were also shared. During the Health and Resilience session, which as noted above, was disappointingly largely gender blind, the Zoom Q and A provided an essential opportunity for meeting participants and in particular the Gender Audit Team to raise critical gender issues. Issues raised highlighted the need for effective responses to SGBV survivors, the intersection between loss of livelihoods and the mental health impacts including increased risks of family violence as well as the particular barriers faced by women and members of LGBTI communities in having their reproductive and other essential health needs met during the pandemic. Positive examples were also shared of the contributions that refugee women who are skilled health professionals have made during the pandemic and the need to significantly reduce current obstacles and barriers to their formal employment.

## STATEMENTS SUBMITTED ONLINE

Governments and NGOs also had the opportunity to submit statements online in advance of each of the meetings. Across the five sessions a total of 22 statements were submitted and of these 10 were gendered.

**Five statements were submitted for the Opening session**, four from States and one from an NGO. Of these, only the Statements from the USA and the Child Rights Initiative were gendered. In their statement the USA noted the way in which the pandemic had magnified pre-existing protection risks, pointing in particular to increased incidences of gender-based violence and discrimination, and also the increased risks of girls dropping out of school and not returning. The Statement from the Child Rights Initiative also highlighted the particular impacts on children and emphasised the importance of ensuring that all programs are age, gender and diversity sensitive. Importantly, both these critical points were emphasised by the High Commissioner and other panellists during the session. This highlights the importance and value of providing gender inclusive statements in advance of the meetings in order to influence the debate and discussion.

**Three statements were submitted for the Protection session**, one from the USA, one from UNICEF and one from the Child Rights Initiative. Pleasingly all three Statements included at least some gendered analysis. The statements from the USA and the Child Rights Initiative both made clear mentions of the particular needs of women and girls and the importance of addressing SGBV. In addition, the Statement from the Child Rights Initiative also addressed issues of gender equality, reproductive health and disability. The UNICEF statement focused on issues of children's rights and, while sexual violence and child marriage were mentioned, there was no clear gendered analysis of the different ways in which the risks and impacts affect girls and boys.

**The only Statement submitted for the Resilience and Health session** was from UNICEF and while it outlined the importance of including refugee children in national health services and noted the risks of violence they face, once again it lacked gendered analysis.

**Four Statements were submitted for the Climate session**, one from Egypt, one from UNICEF and two from NGOs. Of these, only the Statement from the Act Alliance was gendered. Significantly, it called for recognition of the ways in which gender, age, disability, and other characteristics affect disaster risk and vulnerability and for the adoption of inclusive and intersectional approaches and specific measures to include the perspectives of women, youth, people with disabilities and others who may be in particularly marginal situations.

**Nine Statements were submitted for the Closing session**, six were from States, one from the World Bank Joint Data Centre, one from UNICEF and one from the European Network on Statelessness. Only four of these included any substantive focus on gender issues. The statements from both Australia and the USA highlighted their concerns related to the increased SGBV in the context of the pandemic and the importance of actively involving refugee women in solutions. Australia particularly noted that involving women-led refugee organisations in the design and implementation of protection programming remains essential. Australia also urged UNHCR to continue working with partners and donors to maintain the delivery of sexual and reproductive health services. The Statement from the World Bank drew attention to the gendered economic impacts, noting that forcibly displaced women and girls may be particularly affected by escalating gender-based violence and at increased risks of engaging in negative coping mechanisms. UNICEF in particular are congratulated for their strong and gender inclusive statement which contributed a number of important, and clearly gender-sensitive, recommendations. These addressed the importance of collecting AGD disaggregated data and the need for increased funding for gender-sensitive SGBV and mental health interventions. It is however important to note that despite the many gender inclusive Statements submitted, none directly acknowledged the particular protection challenges or rights for LGBTI communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICES**

The sections below present a compilation of all of the recommendations and good practices shared by session presenters, via the Zoom Q and A and in the Statements presented in advance of the sessions. The many excellent gendered recommendations submitted in the report from the UNHCR/ NGO Consultations are also included. These are organised thematically and, in addition to the gender inclusive recommendations, also include a small number of recommendations which while not explicitly gendered apply equally to all women and men. All recommendations have been compared with the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the issues across the six thematic areas presented above. With the exception of the critical issue of reproductive health and rights, which is only addressed by one recommendation, a set of clear and detailed recommendations included below clearly address all of the identified thematic areas. An analysis of AGD aspects of Public Health Strategies would enhance the development of policy and service provision. In the same way that many of the issues are intersectional, many of the stronger recommendations emphasise the intersectionality that is also required in implementing solutions. For example, many of the recommendations which address the inclusion and empowerment of refugee women recognise the importance of gender equality and addressing SGBV. Similarly, recommendations related to access to justice note the importance of actively involving women-led groups with knowledge and experience in advocacy for gender justice. It is also important to note that while the issues of racism and xenophobia were discussed by the High Commissioner and others as an issue of major concern, with the exception of the Statement submitted by the Act Alliance, there was no substantial discussion of the way in which racism and xenophobia intersect with gender discrimination to compound the risks of exclusion for refugee, displaced and stateless women and girls. There were no specifically gendered recommendations directly linked to addressing racism and xenophobia.

## **GENDER RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **THEME 1: ECONOMIC ISSUES AND POVERTY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS**

- That programming which integrates SGBV responses with economic inclusion, involving the private sector and financial institutions, be increased.
- That as refugee women and girls are the most vulnerable to the negative economic outcomes of COVID-19, they must be included at every level of decision making and every action taken, including through livelihoods opportunities in host countries.
- That the gender barriers to contributory health insurance systems due to women's insecure informal employment, be addressed through funded Social Protection schemes.
- That in addition to being provided training, women must also have access to employment opportunities and livelihoods.
- To support the inclusion of the most vulnerable populations in livelihood activities and to improve their self-reliance, UNHCR, the World Bank's Partnership for Economic Inclusion and 13 non-governmental organizations are scaling up the "graduation approach" through the Poverty Alleviation Coalition.

## **THEME 2: THE EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS**

- The key role that local communities, in including women, play in providing community-based protection responses must be fully recognised through programs to support gender equality and through further financial support and resourcing of women-led refugee groups and CBOs. Current barriers must be addressed, and structures and systems urgently developed to allow this to happen.
- That to address gender inequality, we have to move from using the language of "gender sensitivity" to that of "gender transformation" and that all programs have to have this as a key aim.
- That partnerships be diversified to include organizations that are led by women, by LGBTI individuals and by members of communities that are particularly at risk, supporting their organizations in order for them to be effective.
- That we should invest more in long term institutional strengthening of front-line responders, particularly women and refugee-led organizations in protracted crises. Women-led, refugee and IDP led organizations need more funding, including more flexible and predictable funding.
- That we stop looking at women as victims and stop looking at people as being vulnerable and really ensure that in preparing for a disaster we go through an empowering process of participation and consultation, making sure that those who are most impacted are the ones at the table and who are part of the planning process.
- That systems be urgently developed to support inclusive and transparent decision making and consultation between refugee communities, including all women and girls, NGOs, INGOs, civil societies and donors, and the inclusion of refugees into national strategies and mechanisms.
- That it is not enough for refugees just to have a voice, they should also have a "Vote" in what happens to them and their communities.
- Improve the collaboration with refugee-led organisations, which have been critical in the COVID-19 response and find ways to fund them and to strengthen their capacity, while seizing opportunities to build back better, to improve preparedness and develop Age, Gender and Diversity sensitive response plans (NGO Consultations 2020).

- Increase collaboration with local authorities, displaced populations, host communities and grassroots organizations in order to strengthen community-based preparedness and response to disasters, as well as to establish culturally appropriate and context specific adaptation strategies that will increase resilience to the effects of climate change. Emphasize inclusion of women, youth, elderly people and people with disabilities in decision making and leadership (NGO Consultations 2020).
- Ensure that support to communities' own protection response in no way overshadows the primary responsibility of States and other duty bearers. The work with and support to community-based protection structures should avoid establishing parallel structures, but rather enable communities to access effective national protection mechanisms, including national child protection, and GBV prevention, mitigation and response services (NGO Consultations 2020).
- Enable local actors, particularly community-based organizations, to have access to resources made available for protection responses, including by addressing administrative and political barriers, and allocating dedicated, flexible funding to community-based organizations (NGO Consultations 2020).

### **THEME 3: GROUPS COVERED BY THE AGE GENDER AND DIVERSITY FRAMEWORK**

- That an Age, Gender and Diversity lens should be fully integrated in every aspect of UNHCR's work.
- Livelihoods, technical training and a focus on hygiene needs specifically tailored to women and girls with a disability.
- Online support services, including those for women and girls with a disability, must be available in languages other than English.
- LGBTI communities must be recognized as valid and accepted members of all communities and their needs must be fully addressed in all government systems.
- Responding to the protection needs of LGBTI people in displacement requires a multi-stakeholder approach to address both the direct consequences and the long-term impact of COVID-19
- The need to acknowledge and respond to the rights of the LGBTI community and apply ASPIRE guidelines to assist states to fulfil their obligations to prevent and mitigate the impact of COVID- 19 on LGBTI persons.
- That Indigenous knowledges and voices be included in ALL disaster planning, now and into the future.
- Actively engage in Global Refugee Forum pledges related to the Clean Energy Challenge and others linked to protection and assistance of displaced populations of all ages, genders, and diversities in the context of disasters, climate change, and environmental degradation (NGO Consultations 2020).
- Integrate community-based approaches to protection in all programs. This includes recognizing and supporting with technical advice and resources the role of affected communities, in all their diversity, in identifying and addressing their protection needs and working in partnership with them in the design, delivery, monitoring and subsequent optimization of protection responses. Such partnership work should reflect the full age, gender and diversity (AGD) spectrum (NGO Consultations 2020).

#### **THEME 4: THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION**

- That dedicated support, including scholarships, for girls and women of all ages are provided to ensure their access to education, which is key to achieving gender equality and reducing the risks of SGBV, including early and forced marriage.
- That increased support is provided to girls who have been raped, are pregnant, or forced into marriage, to provide them mental health services, to allow them to return to school, to be included in safety nets and not to be shamed.
- That UNHCR work with host governments to create conditions in which refugee girls can attend national schools under the same conditions and with the same benefits as their community peers.
- That additional support be provided to support all refugees' access to technology and digital literacy, including all women and girls.
- That the problems experienced by many refugees in accessing/affording technology, including older refugees who are often afraid of technology be urgently addressed. The provision of information in alternative forms including on paper and via radio and video needs to be included.
- The digital divide remains, requiring collaborative solutions from the private sector, governments, NGOs and International Organizations to close the divide, increase access to digital work opportunities and online education.
- Refugee children often need additional support such as language lessons, assistance to address differences in curriculum content and sequencing and adapting to new behavioural and academic practices in schools.

#### **THEME 5: SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

- That specialized activities, including safe houses, counselling, cash, support and prevention services to address SGBV, should be increased.
- That community-based approaches to SGBV including initiatives that specifically address child early and forced marriages, a huge and under-recognized problem, should be funded.
- That specialized SGBV response services, accessible to all survivors, young, elderly, with disabilities, LGBTI and male survivors, should be expanded.
- That organizations set aside dedicated budget and resources to support SGBV response and prevention programming.
- That given the scope of GBV and the reversal of gains we are witnessing now with the pandemic, it is urgent to expand funding for GBV prevention programs, in particular those led directly by forcibly displaced women and girls.
- That all agencies provide regular training on the prevention of sexual exploitation abuse and implement safe and confidential reporting mechanisms.
- That all women and girls who have experienced SGBV have access to justice.
- That it is essential to also engage with women-led organizations who already have a long-standing experience of influencing legal frameworks and policies to ensure the system hold perpetrators to account and protects the rights of women and girls.
- That SGBV community support groups be established to engage men and boys to prevent violence against women.
- The Global Compact on Refugees promotes gender equality and the empowerment of refugee women and girls. It is important that these commitments and corresponding GRF pledges are

integrated in the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. This requires that gender equality considerations are integrated throughout the COVID-19 responses, but also ensures that targeted interventions address specific needs for example around GBV response services.

- That the following steps be taken to ensure GBV stays as a top priority agenda for UNHCR: (a) Address the pervasive under-resourcing of this critical issue through greater partnerships and concerted efforts of all stakeholders – governments, UN agencies, local organisations, affected communities etc - to develop a bold agenda of catalytic actions to eradicate GBV. (b) Ensure that GBV remains an integral part of response plans developed at national and local levels; ensuring voices articulating the needs of women and girls are brought to the centre of all actions, incorporating an age, diversity and gender approach, and finally, ensuring that GBV risks are mitigated across all sectors.
- Actively acknowledge the critical importance of community-based approaches to protection, ensure that community-based protection is prioritized from the onset of a crisis and promote the holistic integration of active community engagement in all protection activities, including Child Protection, prevention, mitigation and response to SGBV, as well as protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (NGO Consultations 2020).

## **THEME 6: HEALTH ISSUES**

- That the often-overlooked need for access to hygiene products be addressed as a core part of protection activities.
- That all women and girls have access to effective sexual and reproductive health services.
- That equal access to COVID -19 vaccination is provided for all refugees and IDPs.
- That all refugees be included in host country national health care and social insurance systems.
- That the international community and donors ease the burden on host countries and share the responsibilities of granting refugees' access to national health care through the provision of additional resources.
- That the provision of psychosocial support for all groups including women and youth be a top priority for UNHCR. Psycho-social support programs will need to be expanded and strengthened to address the effects of isolation, bereavement, and trauma.
- That UNHCR continue to support efforts to provide employment to significant numbers of women in the provision of health care as a meaningful step towards gender equality and female empowerment, with important economic and social benefits to the woman herself, as well as to her family and her community.

## **EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

Many examples of good practice were shared across the sessions including via the zoom Q and A and in the Statements submitted in advance of each session. These provide strong and concrete examples of the range of gender inclusive programs and activities required in order to address many of the recommendations outlined in the previous section. They include a number of very effective initiatives currently being implemented by refugee women's groups, NGOs and UNHCR, which with additional and sustained funding, might be replicated widely.



## **THEME 1: ECONOMIC ISSUES AND POVERTY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS**

UNHCR is working to decentralize their work to get more resources and funding out to NGOs, more funding to local host community systems, ensuring that refugee women are participants and decision makers in this process. *Gillian Triggs*

In the refugee camps in Bhutan, the women-led groups worked with UNHCR to target SGBV survivors with livelihoods programs. These included training and support to form self-help groups focused on income **generation**. *Maya Devi*

I CAN South Sudan works to empower refugees and mostly women through entrepreneurship skills and giving them capital for self-reliance.

Cash-based interventions and gender-based violence prevention/response tools are critical to ensure that women and girls, among the persons of concern to UNHCR, are provided adequate support in the time of the pandemic. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

Where national approaches permit, UNHCR teams are connecting qualified and experienced refugee medics with hospitals and clinics in need of additional staff to confront the health crisis and are advocating for and supporting refugee inclusion efforts to help with the response. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

Through the flagship program, MADE51, which provides global market opportunities for refugee artisans (with a specific focus on women) by partnering with local social enterprises, refugees have been producing facemasks and other equipment for frontline workers since the first months of the pandemic, as well as other items, which are sold online. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

## **THEME 2: THE EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS**

In Jordan, sharing good news stories across refugee communities which highlighted women and girls' strengths and achievements during the COVID-19 pandemic, fostered hope and community resilience. *Ms. Ala Ali Al Qassem*

UNHCR acknowledged the invaluable contribution of women-led groups and have been supporting them to facilitate access to essential services and information. *Gillian Triggs*.

UNHCR responses emphasised integrating refugees into the national education systems in host countries, supporting women-led initiatives, and the inclusion of refugees and IDPs, statelessness in national mechanisms. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

UNHCR's community-based protection colleagues connect people who understand refugee voices, including girls and young women, which is essential for program design, delivery and accountability. They work closely with women-led groups and networks in ensuring access to essential services and information. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

UNHCR works in partnership with civil society organisation including LGBTIQ+ organisations to better reach out to LGBTIQ+ people, to understand their protection needs, and to develop referral pathways that are safe and accessible. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

Plan International partners with women-led organisations to support their advocacy to influence long-term national legal frameworks, policies and gender norms. Building on the strengths and capacities of forcibly displaced women is essential for upholding human rights, ensuring effective protection and empowerment. *Enzo Tabet Cruz*

UNHCR continues to advocate, together with partners, for full equality for women in nationality law matters, consistent with Action 3 of the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness. Most recently UN Women, UNHCR, UNDP and others co-sponsored a high-level side event on this issue at UNGA, together with the Global Campaign on Equal Nationality Rights. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

### **THEME 3: GROUPS COVERED BY THE AGE, GENDER AND DIVERSITY FRAMEWORK**

“Family Unity”, and empowerment programs, funded by the refugee diaspora and run by refugee-led women’s groups in the refugee camps in Bhutan, provide essential support to women and girls with a disability to raise their voices and be heard. *Maya Devi*

The inclusion of LGBTI peoples in all of the government systems in Ecuador ensures that they are seen as a valid and accepted part of the population. *Ms. Maria Fernanda Cevallos Jaramillo.*

The Aspire Guidelines are a reminder that during COVID-19 pandemic, we need to be accountable to all men, women, girls and boys regardless of AGD. However, they require specific guidance and contextual adaptation for use in displacement contexts. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

All UNHCR’s guidance is driven by its commitment to an AGD approach to programming. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

UNHCR and partners adapted existing alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied children by providing material support to families already caring for unaccompanied children and supporting foster families to care for unaccompanied children. They also support reunifications of children who were split from their parents due to travel. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

UNHCR’s Community-based Protection Community of Practice is a space for submission of field practices, repository of resources, a place for the exchange of ideas, examples, tools and suggestions, and a source for updates on issues related to age, gender and diversity, community-based protection, and accountability to affected people. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

UNHCR publishes an annual report on accountability to AGD. The report reflects on the challenges and achievements in advancing the AGD approach. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

One important area of work is the ongoing renewal of UNHCR’s approach to Results-Based Management (RBM), which aims to enable the organization to report globally on a core set of some 50 indicators that accompany the new results framework. Where relevant, these impact and outcome-level indicators will be disaggregated by age, sex, and disability, as well as other diversity characteristics. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

UNHCR’s AGD policy, including its core action on women and girls’ meaningful participation in decision-making, is a mandatory policy, which applies to all operations and all contexts. Between 2018-2019, UNHCR has invested in the roll out of the 2018 AGD policy, by issuing guidance, developing tools and providing direct operational support to the field. Specifically, in 2020, UNHCR has issued the gender equality tool kit. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

Following up on the implementation of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), a five-year action plan on disability inclusion has been developed to advance disability inclusion at both organizational and operational level. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

UNHCR has embarked on a series of consultations in 2019-2020 in preparation for a global roundtable which will take place in spring 2021 with a focus on protection and solutions for LGBTIQ+ people through a multi-stakeholder approach.

### **THEME 4: THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION**

In refugee communities in Jordan women played a key role in mentoring and providing support to mothers’ home schooling their children. *Ms. Ala Ali Al Qassem*

UNHCR is working with local actors and community members to ensure that communication channels are accessible to all refugees. *UNHCR Chat moderator.*

Supporting safe return to school for those most at risk of dropping out, including adolescent girls, with cash support, engagement with families and remedial classes. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

UNHCR has been significantly increasing its collaboration with development partners that seek to improve digital skills, advocating for more women entrepreneurs and supporting and providing women and girls with training and computers to have more opportunities in the labour market. An example is UNHCR's engagement on digital livelihoods together with UNDP and Microsoft. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

UNHCR is working with a range of stakeholders to include digital literacy and skills into education, with a focus on girls and young women. This includes programs for secondary school students in partnership with private sector and national Ministries, and using technology to improve the quality and modality of teaching. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

## **THEME 5: SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

The Refugee Consortium of Kenya negotiated with the police to respond to women who had to break the COVID-19 curfew because they were experiencing DV, provided "Comfort Packs" for women who presented at the Police Station for protection, and laptops so that women could give testimony remotely. This speaks of a good relationship built between RCK and the Police. *Ms. Leila Muriithia Simiyu*

The UNHCR GBV Principles provide a critical framework to guide the response to SGBV, and this is strengthened by community engagement. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

Lessons learned in Fiji demonstrate that effective and resilient systems to address SGBV can only be built with everyone at the table. This includes women, members of the LGBTI community and survivors of SGBV. *Am. Nazhat Shameem Khan*

["Protecting Forcibly Displaced Women and Girls during the COVID-19 pandemic"](#) Outlines how UNHCR and partners stepped up to address GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **THEME 6: HEALTH ISSUES**

The World Bank is providing grants to host countries classified as Fragile Economies to assist them to provide health services and assist economic growth and recovery. One goal of these grants is that they will enable the inclusion of refugees in health service provision.

In Iran, in the context of COVID-19, women with underlying diseases like cancer were targeted for priority access to flu vaccines. *Dr. Fezzeh Hosseini*

In Uganda, the policy of 'health services for all' which includes refugees, provides access to Sexual and Reproductive health care, HIV testing and family planning. *Dr. Alfred Driwale*

In Jordan, free health services are provided to refugees, including gynaecological and maternity services, and reproductive health care. *Dr Sami Shekh Ali.*

In Bangladesh, BRAC, is working with the Government of Bangladesh providing HIV testing in camps in Cox's Bazar. *Dr Md Akramui Islam.*

In Kenya, the Refugee Consortium of Kenya provided psychosocial support and psychosocial education to refugee communities affected by the pandemic. *Ms. Leila Muriithia Simiyu*

In Jordan refugee women engineers designed easy-to-clean safe houses for use during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Ms. Ala Ali Al Qassem*

Psycho-social support is being provided remotely, through videos and private teleconferencing. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

UNHCR has long been investing in the community health workforce with an emphasis on equal representation of women in that workforce. *UNHCR Chat moderator*

## REFLECTIONS ON PROCESS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROCEDURAL ASPECTS

Thanks go to Senior UNHCR staff for the way in which they normalised the inclusion of an age, gender and diversity (AGD) framework throughout their presentations and comments. This was both impressive and effective. At times, in a response to the usual absence of AGD, the pendulum can swing too far, and self-conscious “gender add-ons” diminish the message. The *matter-of-fact* way in which AGD was included left no doubt that it was core to the discussion and the response. Particular congratulations go to Barthelemy Mwanza Ngane who chaired the Protection Considerations Panel. He demonstrated the power of a good chair to shape a session, and that “Gender” (a). is not just a “women’s issue” but an issue for us all, both women and men; and (b). that men can be superb gender champions.

In this regard it was pleasing to see that the most innovative and challenging gender input came from Andrew Harper, UNHCR Special Advisor on Climate Action. As he had stated in the Climate Change session of the 2020 UNHCR NGO consultations, *‘the time has come to move beyond gender-inclusion to gender- transformation in our work’*. This applies to ALL areas in which UNHCR works. It involves addressing the root causes of gender inequality and recognizing the way in which gender inequality intersects with and is compounded by discrimination. This includes, among others, on grounds of race, class and gender identity. A gender transformative approach includes strategies to foster progressive changes in power relationships between women and men, which directly impact on individual and community resilience, and equity of access to services and outcomes. The major challenge to us all is now to turn these aspirations into reality. This requires all stakeholders to follow the lead taken by UNHCR and to review their current practices, including rules and regulations around funding allocations. Most importantly it means working collaboratively with refugee-led organisations to develop trust and systems of mutual accountability. This will provide a robust framework to support the refugee organisations aspirations for genuine inclusion, will recognise the essential roles they already play as first responders and will support sustainable long-term responses, which will provide social and economic benefits for all stakeholders.

### ***Disappointing Aspects of Some of The Sessions.***

Despite a number of excellent presentations on key topics, and a reasonable gender representation on the panel, the session on **Resilience and Inclusion, with a focus on Health** was disappointing. It failed to meet the High Commissioner’s commitment in the Opening Session (21/11) to *‘ensure that a gender lens and analysis was applied throughout the Dialogue.’* As has been well documented, there are definite differences in the health needs of women and men. Widows left without male “protection” often struggle to survive and raise their children. Complications related to pregnancy and unsafe abortions remain a major killer of girls and women world-wide. Child and forced marriage, and lack of autonomy in accessing contraception, have major impacts on girls and women’s health. Many young girls die in childbirth as their bodies are not yet sufficiently developed to bear a child. Across the globe domestic and family violence continues to rage in epidemic proportions, made worse by COVID – 19, leading to death and severe physical and mental health impacts for women and children. It is clear that global health inequalities, including among displaced peoples, will not be addressed without the application of an approach which first recognises the gender dimensions and second, works to transform the harmful gender norms which impact on women, men, transgender and non-binary peoples<sup>4</sup>.

The application of an AGD lens would recognize the additional intersectional factors which advantage or increase disadvantage when it comes to health. In the context of forcibly displaced people who already face multiple barriers to accessing adequate health services and in achieving equitable health outcomes, additional intersecting factors of discrimination on grounds of gender, gender identity, disability and ethnic minority status, among others, must be explicitly addressed in

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://globalhealth5050.org/gender-and-health/>

all responses. Health services that are responsive to the diversities within forcibly displaced populations will also benefit diverse members of host populations. Inclusive and equitable health outcomes must have a gender and diversity analysis at the centre. This must recognize the ways in which gender inequality and patriarchal norms and structures influence health systems, policies and practices.

### ***The discourse of Vulnerability***

The language of vulnerability, including with reference to refugee women and girls, was used repeatedly in the session on **Climate action**. Until the recent past, refugee women and girls were most often talked about as being a vulnerable minority, with the implication that vulnerability was a female attribute. The assumption is that women are usually helpless and in need of protection. This language must change from women needing protecting, to an acknowledgement of the structural issues which make life more dangerous for many women. It must acknowledge that without structures in place to enable all women to use their skills, traditional knowledges and wisdom to tackle problems, nothing will be fully effective. If we continue to classify women as vulnerable at a personal/individual level, they will remain silenced, their skills underutilized, and gender equality a dream. In preparing effective responses to disasters, we must go through an empowering process of participation and consultation with all women and girls.

### ***A Reluctance to articulate Gender and SGBV - The elephant in the room***

In the session on **Climate action**, during the first round of otherwise excellent and thought-provoking presentations, none of the panellists, nor the chair mentioned gender, despite gender issues being central to the positions they were arguing. Neither was the intersectional nature of the experiences of climate change implicitly mentioned. This was despite the superb briefing note distributed before the session "Gender, Displacement and Climate Change" co-authored by Andrew Harper with Dr Kia Vinke. The AGD Framework and policy was the "elephant in the room", implicit in everything, they presented but never articulated.

Fortunately, in the second session, the chair asked a question based on submissions from the Gender Audit team which actually named the 'elephant' (Gender and SGBV) and gave panel members permission to address it. There were passionate and insightful responses from Ambassador Khan and from Hindou Ibrahim, naming the impacts of emergencies and disaster, including endemic SGBV, on refugee and displaced women and girls, and the knowledge that without their full involvement and participation, nothing will change.

One outcome of the HCD could be to take the "elephant" out of the room, so that people with such passion and knowledge about the impact of issues on women and girls, as well as the massive contributions they make, do not feel that they cannot openly express them, without "permission" through direct questions. Age, gender and diversity must be overtly discussed. Women and girls are over 50% of the refugee population and we cannot afford to dismiss the human rights abuses they suffer and the contributions they can make. For this to happen we need inspirational leadership from UNHCR senior staff and good chairs who are gender aware. It needs key stakeholders, including the humanitarian community, to make the major move from gender sensitivity to gender transformation and empowerment. We must recognize that resilience will not happen without all women being as included as men.

In the final session, **Reflections on outcomes of the virtual dialogues and the way forward**, leadership on the recognition of the gender aspects of the pandemic and the wider response to the refugee community was again shown by the High Commissioner. Seven of the respondents in the Fishbowl mentioned gender related issues, and their input was exceptionally good. However, the disappointing aspect of the session was that 13 respondents did not mention Gender, AGD, or women and girls, although it would have been appropriate in all cases. The issues they discussed all have an AGD dimension which needs unpacking to inform the development of systems which

respond to the diverse needs of all forcibly displaced peoples. This is an indication that key stakeholders in the response to refugees are not clearly or consistently articulating an AGD approach to their work, despite the commitments in the GCR, and pledges made around the GRF. We still have a LONG way to go. However, the comments that were made were, on the whole, strong, inclusive and with excellent recommendations.

### ***On Gender Equality***

Gender equality does not just mean “women and girls” It is acknowledged that ALL refugees share many basic needs. However, to achieve gender equity, we must recognize that refugee women and girls, men and boys have different experiences, and that all of these need to be effectively responded to. It must not be assumed that “one size fits all” or that one set of needs is more important than the other. They both have to be addressed before we can achieve the goal of gender equality, which is basic to the UNHCR AGD Policy and Framework.

The session on **Protection Considerations** was excellent, with a major focus on Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD), and the experience of women and girls.

However, gender inequality has to be examined in the context of the intersectional nature of discrimination against refugees, both women and men. It does not mean that if refugee women and girls have equal access to education, health care, shelter, livelihoods, and decision-making processes, SGBV will disappear. That would imply that men and boys are not subject to SGBV, and we know this is not true. While women and girls are at significantly higher risk of SGBV, the risks are not the same for all women and girls or for all men and boys. To fully address the problem of SGBV we need to identify the intersecting factors which increase vulnerability for particular groups including members of the LGBTI community and among others, including unaccompanied minors and those with a disability. SGBV is mainly a structural problem. It is encouraging to see this reflected in some of the examples of good practice presented in the meetings which focus on structural change. To achieve this, we need to ensure that the concept of “Gender Equality” is not used as shorthand for gender mainstreaming or gender-inclusive programming. Equally we must work to ensure that diversity considerations are fully integrated across all programs and responses.

### ***The need for accuracy in reporting.***

The following observation comes from all members of the Gender Audit Team, and the researchers who have spent many years in the field working in refugee sites in nearly 30 countries. At times, and with the best of intentions, when describing good practice, presenters inadvertently give the false impression that these services are available to all refugees in a particular site, when, in fact, they are not. Refugees who have lived experience and are fully aware that this is not the case, and that in fact, some services are not as effective as described.

### ***Refugee representation and inclusion.***

Once again, we congratulate the High Commissioner for raising what is sometimes a contentious issue and speaking strongly on the need for meaningful inclusion. He stated that it is not enough for refugees just to have a voice, they should also have a “Vote” in what happens to them and their communities. Refugee-led organisations play an essential role in giving validity to the voices and are representative of communities. It is critical that these steps be taken because refugees, particularly women, girls and members of the LGBTI communities, as well as male leaders, often risk their lives to have their voices heard. They must have genuine inclusion and an equal place at the table. It would mean that their voices would be listened to, not just heard. As the High Commissioner noted, there is no other way for refugee communities to ‘vote’ in the decisions which govern their lives, from the local level to the international stage.

There was also a suggestion that refugees need to be encouraged to take more responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. Until the intersectional nature of the range of discriminations faced by refugees, such as discrimination in the labour market, gender discrimination, and problems

faced by the LGBTI community, the elderly and refugees with a disability, persist, this will be impossible to achieve.

The Gender Audit Team, who conducted the documentation and analysis of the 6 HCD dialogue meetings represent all of the five UN designated world regions and were recruited because of their direct links to a range of refugee-led organizations, a long history of advocacy, and continuing interactions with refugee populations across the world. Given the strong emphasis on support for refugee-led organizations, and for ensuring that the voices of refugees are truly representative of a broad range of refugees, they would welcome the opportunity to meet with the High Commissioner, not to discuss their own organizations, but to present to him a range of proven strategies and activities developed to ensure that their work is representative, and recommendations for models which could be more widely used. This would include strategies to ensure that women also “vote”. They have clearly demonstrated their commitment and ability in the excellent work they have undertaken in this audit process.

## **KEY PROCEDURAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE GENDER AUDIT TEAM**

### **To UNHCR, NGOs and Donors**

- That the increase in SGBV experienced by women and girls as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises, such as the challenges of Climate Change, be acknowledged, articulated and addressed in all current programs and potential future solutions.
- That all key stakeholders in the field of health service provision apply an AGD lens to their work, as well as considering the other important intersections of health with education, livelihoods, shelter, effective protection, and refugee participation.
- That Age, Gender and Diversity aspects of all issues be explicitly named and addressed, and not left to an assumption of inclusion, for example by using the term “vulnerable groups”.
- That in a similar manner that the word “prostitution” has been replaced in the discourse about refugee women to that of “being forced to sell or exchange sex”, the notion of “vulnerable women” be replaced with the discourse of “women in vulnerable situations” and that suggested solutions be adapted accordingly, from those focused on protecting the helpless, to those of empowering women to protect themselves.
- That in all future policies, reports and meetings, we move to the more inclusive language adopted by UNHCR in the context of AGD, of referring to ALL women and girls, men and boys, to emphasise that forcibly displaced people are diverse, and INCLUDE all ages, those who are LGBTI, people with disabilities, people from ethnic and religious minorities, and of Indigenous status etc., and to ensure that we are not “othering” particular groups by naming them or their needs as outside of the mainstream refugee community.
- That, in order to ensure that funding is maintained and that donors and all key stakeholders are aware of the true situation in refugee sites, care be taken to ensure that the quality and availability of services in camps and refugee sites around the world are reported accurately in presentations and that major gaps and shortages of effective services are not overlooked.
- That all key stakeholders are encouraged to adopt the Gender Transformative approach in all health service provision, and across all responses to refugee protection, both during and post the COVID-19 pandemic.
- That in all strategies to encourage inclusion, resilience and adaptation to climate change (and in all future protection planning) the role of all women and other diverse categories be acknowledged and addressed and be a KPI in all funding applications and program design.
- That the underlying assumption that refugees should undertake work for their communities as volunteers, evident across the field and in some of the discussions during the HCD, be

challenged, as it is widely recognized that empowerment will only come when refugees can earn a living.

## **To UNHCR**

- That UNHCR formalise the normalization of the inclusion of Age, Gender and Diversity, and gender transformative language that was demonstrated in many sessions in the HCD, and ensure that this becomes standard operating practice in all future meetings, conferences and briefing notes.
- That all moderators and presenters in future meetings always include AGD, women and girls specifically in their text, as an aide-memoir to those who have not yet incorporated this into their thinking.
- That in future online meetings, and in particular, meetings planned as part of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations, UNHCR encourage and facilitate a system to allow member states and other participants to answer questions on the Zoom Q and A, to ensure the rich level of debate which has occurred in previous high-level meetings.
- That in all future online meetings, the UNHCR staff, who do such an excellent job in responding to questions on Zoom Q and A, prompt participants to include an AGD perspective through the application of a gender lens to all of their answers.
- That given the commitments to women, girls and an AGD approach encapsulated in the [New York Declaration, 2017](#), the [UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees, 2018](#), as well as the many gender and AGD related pledges made as part of the Global Refugee Forum, that UNHCR specifically request the chairs of all sessions and panels (in particular their own representatives) in future high level meetings, directly address the gender and AGD components of the issues under discussion, and that if they are not aware of these, assistance be provided from the UNHCR Gender Unit.
- That UNHCR's senior advisor on Gender Equality be replaced without further delay.
- That support in the effective application of the AGD policy and framework be provided by UNHCR, and in the Digital Platform for the GCR, and that this portal be actively promoted and supported with training and discussion forums to assist the replication of the many excellent programs which are in place in countries around the world.
- That the Gender Audit team meet with the High Commissioner and his team in the New Year to share the good practice examples of consultation and representation that they have undertaken ahead of each of the HCD meetings, and to discuss what “legitimacy” looks like for displaced women and girls and LGBTI advocates, highlighting common experiences from all five regions of the world. The team can discuss their recommendations to fulfill the commitments of inclusion, in particular the inclusion and recognition of refugee and IDP women and girls. They wish to explore how best to validate the refugee voices, which have now been so clearly heard, into “votes”/genuine and inclusive participation for the strategies, programs and new initiatives, along with the “votes” from all other key stakeholders such as INGOs, NGOs, faith-based organisations and donors.

## **CONCLUSION**

As can be seen from the data presented, the focus on gender inclusion and the gendered aspects of the pandemic was extremely good. This was due in a large part to the impressive role and lead taken by UNHCR staff in both their presentations, and in the selection of session chairs and panel members. It was also a tribute to the presence of the inspirational refugee women and men who made such a positive



impact on the proceedings, their contributions clearly demonstrating the value of including refugee women and girls, men and boys as key contributors to the decision-making process.

## **Next Steps**

While the work of the GA Team officially terminates with the submission of the final report, we are committed to continuing the process. Pittaway and Bartolomei have already completed an analysis of the Gender Commitments in the GCR against the pledges made following the GRF 2019 and will undertake a full analysis of the outcomes and commitments made in the HCD 2020 against these, with the aim of informing an effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation process. This will build on the ***Evaluation of the Gender Audit Process, 2017 – 2020***, (Annexe 3) which moves from the New York Declaration to the HCD 2020, including the audit of the Thematic meetings contributing to the drafting of the GCR, the HCD 2018, the UNHCR/NGO Consultations 2019, and 2020, the preparatory meetings for the GRF, and the Pledging Process, and the five meetings which comprised the HCD 2020. The results have been compared to the outcomes of previous meetings which have had a Gender Audit and also against the Gender commitments made in the GCR, and the Pledges made as part of the GRF process.

## **Aims of the Gender Audit Process**

As this was a dynamic and iterative process, the aims and objectives were expanded over the 5 years from the adoption of the New York Declaration. In summary:

### **The aim of the Gender Audit (2017) was to:**

- Support UNHCR's efforts to ensure that the gender commitments outlined in the New York Declaration were fully integrated across the Global Compact on Refugees.

### **The aim of the Gender Audit (2019) was to:**

- Ensure that the strong commitments to refugee women and girls, and to diverse groups in both the New York Declaration (2016) the Global Compact on Refugees (2018) and the AGD Policy (2018) are applied in all activities and that pathways for implementation be included in the Pledging Process.

### **The aim of the Gender Audit (2020) was to:**

- Evaluate the application of these commitments in the response to COVID-19 pandemic and to future emergencies, including Climate Change.

## **The Objectives were to:**

1. change the discourse about refugee women from “minority and vulnerable”, to “equal and capable, and maximize strengths and capacity of all refugee women and girls and ensure their self-representation and meaningful participation in all discussions and decision-making processes about themselves, their families and communities, short term and long-term solutions at every level from the local to the international,
2. effectively and systematically protect all refugee women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence,
3. generate political will to address the needs of all refugee women and girls and to unlock the contribution they can make to providing solutions,
4. address the vulnerabilities and barriers which prevent the full protection and inclusion of all refugee women and girls,

5. Encourage reference and adherence to and the UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Policy which recognises the different needs of children, youth, women, the elderly, LGBTI communities, ethnic minorities and indigenous groups and people with a disability. Including through influencing the pledging process to ensure that the needs of all women and girls, and all groups included in the AGD policy were addressed in the Pledges made. (Please note these categories are in fact cross cutting for example, a disabled elderly woman can also be a member of a minority ethnic group).

As can be seen below, based on analysis to date we can say with confidence that the Gender Audit process, and the team of committed refugee women, had a significant impact on the inclusion of gender related issues over time. We would argue that these figures suggest that significant political will (objective 3) was generated by the Gender Audit Process (working in tandem with many others) to produce significant trends in the inclusion and response to gender issues and the endemic SGBV experienced by refugee women and girls. It is interesting to note that the summary reports of the sessions across the HCD2018, which was not gender audited, included only very limited references to gender issues. The overall summary report is completely gender blind and there are only two references to the importance of applying an age, gender and diversity lens and one reference to the particular vulnerabilities of LGBTI communities in the summary reports of the Thematic sessions. There were NO references to either gender equality or SGBV in any of the session reports.

### **GENDER INCLUSION AGAINST THE AIMS OF THE GENDER AUDIT IN THE GCR 2017, THE PLEDGES 2019 AND THE HCD 2020**

Summary – for full details see Annexe 3

<b>Objectives - Gender Audit</b>	<b>Global Compact on Refugees</b>	<b>Pledges GRF</b>	<b>2020 HCD</b>
<b>1. Change the discourse about from “minority and vulnerable” to “equal and capable” and maximise strengths and capacity of all refugee women and girls, and ensure their representation and meaningful participation</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 7</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 34</b>	<b>Total Mentions in the sessions - 36</b>  <b>Total Mentions in the Zoom Q and A - 26</b>
<b>Objectives - Gender Audit</b>	<b>Global Compact on Refugees</b>	<b>Pledges GRF</b>	<b>2020 HCD</b>
<b>2. Effectively and systematically protect all refugee women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 8</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 26</b>	<b>Total Mentions in sessions - 35</b>  <b>Total Mentions in the Zoom Q and A - 11</b>
<b>Objectives - Gender Audit</b>	<b>Global Compact on Refugees</b>	<b>Pledges GRF</b>	<b>2020 HCD</b>
<b>4. Address the vulnerabilities and barriers which prevent the protection and full inclusion of all refugee women and girls</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 23</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 29</b>	<b>Total Mentions in the sessions - 85</b>  <b>Total Mentions in the Zoom Q and A - 35</b>

<b>Objectives - Gender Audit</b>	<b>Global Compact on Refugees</b>	<b>Pledges GRF</b>	<b>2020 HCD</b>
<b>5. Encourage reference and adherence to the UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Policy</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 22</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 40</b>	<b>Total Mentions in the Sessions - 33 Total Mentions in the Zoom Q and A - 16</b>

The analysis to date indicates that the work undertaken by the GA Team and other Gender Champions, leading up to the drafting of the GCR, led to significant gender related content in the GCR, from a very low base in the CRRF. Work leading up to the GCR and the Pledging process resulted in a significant number of Pledges relating to the objectives. It is exceptionally pleasing to see this continuing into the discussions and promises made in the 2020 HCD.

The next logical step is a more forensic examination of the data, with the aim of contributing to an effective monitoring and evaluation strategy.

**Thank you - The Gender Audit Team**

## ANNEXES

### ANNEXE 1: KEY GENDER RELATED TRENDS AND ISSUES RAISED ACROSS THE SESSIONS IN THE HIGH COMMISSIONERS DIALOGUE, INDICATING THE FREQUENCY IN WHICH THEY WERE ADDRESSED AND THE INTERSECTIONALITY OF THE ISSUES.

Opening	Protection Considerations	Resilience and Inclusion Health	Climate Action	Closing Session
The heightened impact of the pandemic on refugee women and girls in terms of <b>economic issues and poverty</b> <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i>	<b>Gendered aspects of economic issues and poverty</b> were discussed by <i>all panellists</i> with clear examples and suggestions for change. This included loss of livelihoods, income for food and basic goods, health care <b>6 Mentions</b>		Women and children <b>50% of displaced</b> population <i>Andrew Harper</i> <b>Women and children most vulnerable</b> to changes <i>Andrew Harper</i> <b>2 Mentions</b>	The rise of “being forced to sell or exchange sex”, because of <b>poverty</b> caused by the pandemic. <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i> Need for economic inclusion of SGBV survivors <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i> <b>2 mentions</b>
			The importance of moving from a <b>gender sensitive to a gender transformative debate.</b> <i>Andrew Harper, UNHCR</i>	We must move from the language of gender sensitivity to that of gender transformation. <i>Hafsar Tameesuddin GAT</i>
	The imperative of achieving <b>gender equality</b> across all areas of concern for ALL women and girls was seen as critically important to address the specific problems faced by women and girls. <i>Mr Barthelemy Ngane</i>		No-one must be left behind <b>Gender equality</b> is the key. <i>Andrew Harper, UNHCR</i> COVID-19 showing up existing <b>challenges to gender equality.</b> <i>Gillian Triggs</i> <b>2 mentions</b>	Gender equality is the key <i>Hafsar Tameesuddin GAT</i>
	<b>Age Gender and Diversity</b> was the focus of the sessions and this was modelled by the all-female panel of presenters. It was very clearly articulated by the male chair, <i>Mr Barthelemy Ngane</i> There must be an AGD focus in all of our work. <i>Gillian Triggs</i> <b>2 direct mentions</b>			

Opening	Protection Considerations	Resilience and Inclusion Health	Climate Action	Closing Session
Lack of access to <b>education</b> for refugee women and girls <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i>	Impact of poverty on <b>access to education</b> and the consequences of that. <i>Ala Ali Al Qassem</i> Importance of support for raped and pregnant young girls to continue education <i>Leila Muriithia Simiyu, RCK</i> <b>2 mentions</b>			Women and girls left behind in <b>education</b> and will not return. Education as a tool to prevent SGBV. <i>Yasmin Sherif</i> <b>Education</b> for all women <i>Hafsar Tameesuddin GAT</i> <b>2 mentions</b>
Vulnerable to <b>Early marriage</b> <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i> <i>Barthelemy Ngane</i>	Poverty and lack of access to education leading to <b>forced and early marriage</b> <i>Gillian Triggs</i>			Take steps to end child and early marriage <i>Rachel Levitan</i> A distressing increase in adolescent pregnancies. <i>Gillian Triggs</i> <b>2 mentions</b>
<b>Exploitation of women and girls</b> <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i>	Increased experience of xenophobia and racism leading to increased <b>exploitation</b> <i>Mr Barthelemy Ngane</i>			
The importance of <b>refugee-led</b> organisations, including resourcing, support and funding	<b>Refugee – led</b> women’s groups very effective and need resourcing. <i>Maya Devi</i>		We just have <b>women-led groups</b> in protection and development <i>Gillian Triggs</i>  <b>Refugee – led</b> women’s groups rely on traditional wisdom and knowledge. Very effective and need resourcing. <i>Hindou Ibrahim</i> <b>3 mentions</b>	The <b>inclusion and funding of women and refugee-led organisations</b> must provide legitimacy and validity for these organisations. <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i>

Opening	Protection Considerations	Resilience and Inclusion Health	Climate Action	Closing Session
<p><b>Inclusiveness</b> of both women and men, <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i></p>	<p>We must not Other groups by naming them as if they are outside of the mainstream community. They must be <b>included</b>. Mr <i>Barthelemy Ngane</i></p>	<p>Refugees – gender barriers to women being <b>included in host country social protection mechanisms</b>. <i>Sophie Witter</i></p>	<p>The importance of meaningfully <b>including women and girls at the centre</b> of all levels of decision making and in providing the support needed for this to happen. <i>1, Andrew Harper, UNHCR</i> <i>2, Ambassador to Fiji Nazahat Shameem Khan</i> <i>3. Hindou Ibrahim</i> <i>4. Gillian Triggs</i> We must <b>listen to the lived experience</b> of women, and children <i>Ambassador to Fiji Nazahat Shameem Khan</i></p> <p>The needs and voices of women and children must be included in national mechanisms and planning <i>Ambassador to Fiji Nazahat Shameem Khan</i> <b>6 mentions</b></p>	<p>While it was good to see recognition of the need for <b>women’s inclusion</b>, this needs adequate structures and funding. <i>Hafsar Tameesuddin GAT</i> <b>3 mentions</b></p>
<p>The important and effective roles of <b>refugee women as first responders</b> <i>Shadi Shhaded</i></p>			<p>Build the capacity of refugee women as <b>first responders</b> <i>Ambassador to Fiji Nazahat Shameem Khan</i></p>	<p>Importance of <b>refugee-led</b> women’s organisations and the support they need <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i> Acknowledge the skills and knowledge of women who are <b>first responders</b> <i>Hafsar Tameesuddin GAT</i> <b>2 mentions</b></p>

Opening	Protection Considerations	Resilience and Inclusion Health	Climate Action	Closing Session
<p>The importance of girls, <b>including minor girls</b>, receiving education and <b>digital skills</b>  <i>Nhial Deng, Kakuma Kenya</i>            Barriers caused by <b>lack of access to technology</b> for refugee women and girls, boys and men.  <i>Barthelemy Ngane</i></p> <p><b>2 mentions</b></p>	<p>The importance of all women and girls, and all diverse groups, receiving <b>digital skills and access to technology</b>, equipment and broadband was raised <i>by all panellists</i>  <b>6 mentions</b></p>		<p>Barrier to technology for displaced people, incl. women and girls  <i>Hindou Ibrahim</i></p>	<p>There must be more training on GBV for refugee women and girls  <i>Gillian Triggs</i></p>
<p>Providing <b>information</b> to minor girls about the dangers of <b>SGBV, forced marriage, including early pregnancy</b>  <i>Nhial Deng, Kakuma Kenya</i></p>	<p>ALL <b>information</b> for refugees has to be provided in languages other than English, and in accessible formats, in particular for women with a disability and women who are pre-literate <i>Maya Devi</i></p>		<p>Women must have more access to a range of training.  <i>Gillian Triggs</i></p>	
<p><b>Livelihoods</b> -Women must be empowered by receiving training, but then have <b>access to employment</b>  <i>Shadi Shhaded</i></p>				<p>Women must have access to livelihoods  <i>Hafsar Tameesuddin GAT</i></p>
	<p>The <b>intersectionality</b> of the negative impacts of the pandemic on refugee women and girls <i>Mr Barthelemy Ngane</i></p>			
<p>The importance of <b>reproductive health care</b>  <i>Fezzah Hosseini</i>  <i>Dr Carmen Alejandra Parra</i>  <b>2 mentions</b></p>		<p><b>Reproductive health care</b> to refugees &amp; the host community.  <i>Sami Shekh Ali</i>            Uganda provides <b>reproductive health care</b> to all <i>Alfred Driwal</i>  <b>2 mentions</b></p>	<p>Refugee women and girls must have <b>access to health care</b> at all times <i>Ambassador to Fiji Nazahat Shameem Khan</i></p>	<p>The provision of <b>reproductive health care</b>. <i>Hafsar Tameesuddin GAT</i></p>

Opening	Protection Considerations	Resilience and Inclusion Health	Climate Action	Closing Session
<p><b>Older people</b> are more at risk <i>Shadi Shhaded</i></p>	<p>Impacts on <b>the elderly</b> were articulated by <i>Tamara Maksimovna Inzhutova</i></p>			
<p>We must include <b>women with a disability in all aspects of life</b> <i>Barthelemy Ngane</i></p>	<p>Impacts on women and girls with a disability. <i>Maya Devi</i>, <b>SGBV</b> experienced by women with a disability, <i>Maya Devi</i> We need more focused services for <b>people with a disability</b> Gillian Triggs <b>5 mentions</b></p>			<p><b>Women with a disability</b> must have equal access to all services <i>Hafsar Tameesuddin GAT</i></p>
	<p><b>Increase of SGBV</b> because of COVID-19, including DV The need to provide <b>safe shelters for victims of SGBV</b> <i>Gillian Triggs</i></p>	<p>HIV Testing, although not specific to LGBTI Communities <i>Md Akramui, Alfred Drwale</i> <b>2 mentions</b></p>	<p>We need <b>shelter for victims of SGBV</b>, HE <i>Ambassador to Fiji Nazahat Shameem Khan</i> We must keep <b>women and children safe from SGBV</b> <i>Elizabeth Puranam</i> <b>2 mentions</b></p>	<p>Establish <b>safe spaces</b> for victims of SGBV <i>Rachel Levitan</i> <i>Fillipo Grandi</i> <b>2 mentions</b></p>
<p>Engage men and boys <b>to stop GBV</b> <i>Barthelemy Ngane</i></p>				



Opening	Protection Considerations	Resilience and Inclusion Health	Climate Action	Closing Session
<p>The <b>SGBV</b> impacts of poverty on refugee women and girls  <i>H.C Filippo Grandi</i>            The importance of <b>“Virtual” on-line support</b> for refugees including to prevent and respond to <b>SGBV</b>  <i>Barthelemy Ngane</i>  <b>2 mentions</b></p>	<p>The importance of addressing <b>SGBV</b> <i>Mr Barthelemy Ngane</i>            The impact of <b>SGBV on children</b>  <i>Gillian Triggs</i>  <b>2 mentions</b></p>		<p><b>The increase of SGBV</b> in emergencies, access to bathrooms, and services for women and girls  <i>Ambassador to Fiji Nazahat Shameem Khan</i></p>	<p>Rise in <b>SGBV</b> in pandemic, The need for <b>specialised services for victims of SGBV.</b>  <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i>            The need for effective response to <b>victims/survivors of SGBV.</b>  <i>Hafsar Tameesuddin GAT</i>            Increase in <b>trafficking and SGBV</b> against women and girls - a shadow pandemic  <i>Rachel Levitan</i>            The importance of <b>preventing violence</b> against refugee women and girls. <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i>            Young women are more vulnerable to SGBV <i>Jayantha Wickramanayake</i>  <b>5 mentions</b></p>
	<p>The importance of inclusion of <b>LGBTI</b> identity in all Government documents, policy and planning.  <i>MS Marias Fernanda Cevallos</i>  <i>Jaramillo Gov. Ecuador</i></p>		<p>The need to address the <b>needs of the LGBTI</b> community in disasters. Inclusion of <b>LGBTI individuals in decision making</b>  <i>Ambassador to Fiji Nazahat Shameem Khan</i>            We need <b>the LGBTI communities.</b> HE <i>Ambassador to Fiji Nazahat Shameem Khan</i>            We must keep <b>LGBTI</b> groups safe. <i>Elizabeth Puranam</i>            We must listen to the lived experience of LGBTI communities <i>Ambassador to Fiji Nazahat Shameem Khan</i>  <b>4 mentions</b></p>	<p><b>LGBTI community</b> to be included at the table and fully included. <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i>            The <b>need for safe spaces for victims of SGBV and for the LGBTI communities.</b>  <i>H. C. Filippo Grandi</i>            Need to work with LGBTI Communities            LGBTI Forum in 2021  <i>Filipo Grandi</i>            We must fight for the rights of the <b>LGBTI communities</b> <i>Hafsar Tameesuddin GAT</i>  <b>LGBTI</b> communities at risk during lockdown <i>Jayantha Wickramanayake</i>  <b>6 mentions</b></p>

Opening	Protection Considerations	Resilience and Inclusion Health	Climate Action	Closing Session
	The need for <b>increased Psycho-social support</b> for refugee communities and front-line workers <i>Gillian Triggs UNHCR</i> <b>Leila Muriithia Simiyu, RCK</b> <b>2 mentions</b>			
	Support for <b>rape victims</b> including comfort packs at Police Stations, <b>on-line justice</b> and more. <b>Leila Muriithia Simiyu, RCK</b>		<b>Justice</b> for women who experience SGBV <i>Ambassador to Fiji Nazahat Shameem Khan</i>	Women and girls must have <b>access to justice</b> , in particular in response to SGBV. <i>Hafsar Tameesuddin GAT</i>
Urgent COVID-19 <b>Vaccination</b> for children and pregnant women <i>Dr. Fezzeh Hosseini</i>		Women with underlying diseases targeted for vaccination <i>Dr. Fezzeh Hosseini</i>		
<b>Health needs of youth</b> <i>1 Nhial Deng, Kakuma Kenya</i> <i>2 Barthelemy Ngane</i> <b>2 mentions</b>				

**ANNEXE 2: GENDER INCLUSION IN THE QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND REPLIES ON THE ZOOM Q AND A.**

*Q=Question R= Reply GAT = Gender Audit Team*

<b>THEME 1 ECONOMIC ISSUES AND POVERTY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS</b>				
<i>The economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls</i>	<i>The economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls</i>	<i>The economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls</i>	<i>The economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls</i>	<i>The economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls</i>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efforts made to address negative impact of COVID-19 on mental health and wellbeing due to lack of appropriate housing and overcrowding that contributes to DV. (Q-GAT)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Places of safety for women may be ensured through cash-based interventions and GBV prevention /response tools. (Q- Liliane Mukidi and R- UNHCR)</li> </ul>		
<i>Safe Livelihoods</i>	<i>Safe Livelihoods</i>	<i>Safe Livelihoods</i>	<i>Safe Livelihoods</i>	<i>Safe Livelihoods</i>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pandemic resulted in temporary or permanent loss of livelihoods due to their informal worker status which has resulted in negative coping mechanisms, difficulties accessing services, family tensions, and more discrimination and stigma. (Q-GAT and R-UNHCR)</li> </ul>		

<b>THEME 2 THE EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS</b>				
<i>The need for Gender Transformative approaches</i>	<i>The need for Gender Transformative approaches</i>	<i>The need for Gender Transformative approaches</i>	<i>The need for Gender Transformative approaches</i>	<i>The need for Gender Transformative approaches</i>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can long-term action against gender discrimination be ensured, being the root cause for vulnerability of women and girls? <i>(Q-Plan International)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To address need for improved health care, women and their inclusion in employment are crucial. There are already many positive examples in countries of asylum, including for the health response to COVID-19. <i>(Q-GAT and R-UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of effective and transformative gender programs and women-led responses that address structural barriers to women's inclusion and rights in context of climate related disasters and displacement. <i>(Q-GAT R-Nazahat Khan and Hindou Ibrahim in the session)</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Gender Equality</b>	<b>Gender Equality</b>	<b>Gender Equality</b>	<b>Gender Equality</b>	<b>Gender Equality</b>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education during the pandemic can be ensured by focusing on gender equity (including voices of girls, young women and mothers), as well as creating development investments. <i>(Q-GAT and R – UNHCR)</i></li> <li>How is UNHCR prioritising gender equality and ensuring its updated commitments in the AGD Policy are being practiced? <i>(Q-Women's Refugee Commission)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNHCR advocates for full equity for women in nationality law matters, consistent with Action 3 of the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness. <i>(Q-Catherine Harrington and R- UNHCR)</i></li> <li>UNHCR facilitates empowerment activities, promotes leadership, gender equality through men and boys' <i>(Q-Manisha Thomas and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GCR promotes gender equality and UNHCR states it is important that these commitments are integrated in responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. <i>(Q- GAT and R – UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>

<b>THEME 2 THE EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS</b>				
<i>The importance of refugee-led organisations</i>	<i>The importance of refugee-led organisations</i>	<i>The importance of refugee-led organisations</i>	<i>The importance of refugee-led organisations</i>	<i>The importance of refugee-led organisations</i>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women and girls' voices are essential for design, delivery and accountability, if they are to be effectively included in education and national systems <i>(Q- Nicole Gaertner, USA and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnering with local women-led organisations is a way to ensure meaningful participation, especially during COVID-19. <i>(Q-GAT and R- UNHCR)</i></li> <li>To tackle gender discrimination and vulnerability of women and girls, this is key to influencing long-term national legal frameworks, policies and gender norms. <i>(Q- Plan International and R- UNHCR)</i></li> <li>UNHCR support women and girls, for example, by working closely with women-led groups and networks and ensuring access to essential services and information. <i>(Q-Anon and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNHCR will also enhance its engagement with Women-led organizations (including forcibly displaced women groups) as they play a key role in effectively preventing GBV on the long-term. <i>- (Q- Anon and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>

<b>THEME 2 THE EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS</b>				
<i>The importance of Inclusion (micro and macro)</i>	<i>The importance of Inclusion (micro and macro)</i>	<i>The importance of Inclusion (micro and macro)</i>	<i>The importance of Inclusion (micro and macro)</i>	<i>The importance of Inclusion (micro and macro)</i>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To uphold human rights, ensuring effective protection and empowerment, it is important that women meaningfully participate and lead decisions that impact their lives, families and communities. <i>(Q-Plan International and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognising refugee women’s skills and qualifications offers incentives for inclusion such as the hiring of foreign-qualified health professionals and technicians. <i>(Q- GAT and R- UNHCR)</i></li> <li>Workplaces need HR policies to be amended to reflect increased use of technology by refugee women, benefiting local economies. Policies need to be reviewed to ensure enabling environment for the employment of refugee women <i>(Q- GAT and R- UNHCR)</i></li> <li>Women are turned back from hospitals and clinics and are not receiving support to combat COVID-19. <i>(Q- GAT and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essential element of strong community health approach is a community health workforce that emphasises women in that workforce; the employment of significant numbers of women in provision of health care will step towards gender equality and empowerment. <i>(Q- Anon and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>

<b>THEME 2 THE EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS</b>				
<i>Refugee Women as first responders</i>	<i>Refugee Women as first responders</i>	<i>Refugee Women as first responders</i>	<i>Refugee Women as first responders</i>	<i>Refugee Women as first responders</i>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do we ensure a fully inclusive health system that supports refugee women as first responders? <i>(Q- GAT)</i></li> </ul>		
<b>THEME 3 GROUPS COVERED BY THE AGD POLICY</b>				
<i>AGD POLICY</i>	<i>AGD POLICY</i>	<i>AGD POLICY</i>	<i>AGD POLICY</i>	<i>AGD POLICY</i>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures for protection ensuring accessibility of information and facilities, establishing outreach support for most isolated persons, and facilitating meaningful consultations with these groups and their representative organisations to identify long-term solutions. <i>(Q-Lauren Shoenster and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refugee women not counted or reported in national COVID-19 figures highlights urgent need to collect accurate AGD data. <i>(Q-GAT and R- UNHCR)</i></li> <li>How is UNHCR planning to tackle the issue of limited diversity-sensitive information to be gathered by NGOs who disseminate information and build community resilience? <i>(Q-GAT and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNHCR space developed called the 'Community-based Protection Community of Practice' for submission of field practices, repository of resources, a place for exchange ideas, examples and tools on AGD protection. <i>(Q-UNHCR Peru and R- UNCHR)</i></li> <li>UNHCR 2020 gender equality toolkit and UN Disability Inclusion Strategy are policy. <i>(Q- Anon and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>

<b>THEME 3 GROUPS COVERED BY THE AGD POLICY</b>				
<b>Problems facing LGBTI communities</b>	<b>Problems facing LGBTI communities</b>	<b>Problems facing LGBTI communities</b>	<b>Problems facing LGBTI communities</b>	<b>Problems facing LGBTI communities</b>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aspire Guidelines, based on <b>sexual orientation and gender identity</b>, are a useful tool which must be used to ensure accountability and inclusivity beyond the pandemic. <i>(Q-GAT and R-UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNHCR ensures communication channels and referral pathways accessible to LGBTIQ+ peoples by working in partnership with relevant civil society organisations to understand their protection needs. <i>(Q- Anonymous and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulties in accessing information about services, and discrimination in using services, can be tackled through better communication channels and partnerships with LGBTIQ+ organisations. <i>(Q- Anon and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Older people</b>	<b>Older people</b>	<b>Older people</b>	<b>Older people</b>	<b>Older people</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older refugees are less likely to access health care, education &amp; employment. The global crisis has compounded this situation. <i>(Q-Lauren Schoenster and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>			
<b>Women with a disability</b>	<b>Women with a disability</b>	<b>Women with a disability</b>	<b>Women with a disability</b>	<b>Women with a disability</b>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women with a disability are less likely to access health care, education &amp; employment. The global crisis has compounded this situation <i>(Q-Lauren Schoenster and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>			



<b>THEME 4 THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION</b>				
<i>Lack of access to education</i>	<i>Lack of access to education</i>	<i>Lack of access to education</i>	<i>Lack of access to education</i>	<i>Lack of access to education</i>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for girls to access/ return to school post COVID-19 to reduce risks of child and early marriage. (Q- GAT and R-UNHCR)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 50% of refugee girls enrolled in secondary school will not return to education. (Q- Priscilla Ndegwa and R-UNHCR)</li> </ul>		
<i>Access to technology for women and girls</i>	<i>Access to technology for women and girls</i>	<i>Access to technology for women and girls</i>	<i>Access to technology for women and girls</i>	<i>Access to technology for women and girls</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COVID -19 shows need of IT knowledge. How will we empower women to build digital skills and literacy? Challenge digital gender stereotypes; advocate for more women entrepreneurs; support with trainings and access to the labour market.?(Q – GAT)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital divide requires collaborative solutions from the private sector, governments, NGOs and International organisations to close the divide. (Q- GAT and R-UNHCR)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNHCR has significantly increased their collaboration with partners to improve digital skills, advocating for more women entrepreneurs and providing women and girls with training &amp; computers for more opportunities in the labour market. (Q- Anon and R-UNHCR)</li> </ul>
<i>Need for good information and training for women and girls</i>	<i>Need for good information and training for women and girls</i>	<i>Need for good information and training for women and girls</i>	<i>Need for good information and training for women and girls</i>	<i>Need for good information and training for women and girls</i>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women are active in agriculture, and need equitable access to weather and climate services, leadership and capacity-building training in order to enhance their resilience. (Q- Anon and R- UNHCR)</li> </ul>

<b>THEME 5 SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE</b>				
<i>Vulnerability to early/child/forced marriage</i>	<i>Vulnerability to early/child/forced marriage</i>	<i>Vulnerability to early/child/forced marriage</i>	<i>Vulnerability to early/child/forced marriage</i>	<i>Vulnerability to early/child/forced marriage</i>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for girls to access/ return to school post COVID-19 to reduce risks of child and early marriage. (Q-GAT and R-UNHCR)</li> </ul>				
<i>Exploitation of women and girls</i>	<i>Exploitation of women and girls</i>	<i>Exploitation of women and girls</i>	<i>Exploitation of women and girls</i>	<i>Exploitation of women and girls</i>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good examples on how UNHCR and partners have stepped up in preventing GBV during the pandemic is in 'Brief on Protecting Forcibly Displaced Women and Girls during the COVID-19 pandemic'. (Q- R.Levitan and R-UNHCR)</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritising GBV can be achieved through bold agenda, great partnerships and integrating GBV approaches in response plans. (Q – Anon and R- UNHCR)</li> </ul>
<i>Access to Justice for women victims of SGBV</i>	<i>Access to Justice for women victims of SGBV</i>	<i>Access to Justice for women victims of SGBV</i>	<i>Access to Justice for women victims of SGBV</i>	<i>Access to Justice for women victims of SGBV</i>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage women-led organizations with long experience of influencing legal frameworks and policies to ensure the system hold perpetrators to account and protect the rights of women and girls. (Q- Anon and R- UNHCR)</li> </ul>

<b>THEME 5 SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE</b>				
<i>Engaging men and boys to stop GBV</i>	<i>Engaging men and boys to stop GBV</i>	<i>Engaging men and boys to stop GBV</i>	<i>Engaging men and boys to stop GBV</i>	<i>Engaging men and boys to stop GBV</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting gender equality through men and boys' engagement programs, informed by priorities set by women and girls <i>Q-Manisha Thomas &amp; R-UNHCR</i>)</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNHCR has prioritized as part of its new GBV policy and will enhance its women and girls empowerment activities as well as men and boys engagement programs. <i>(Q- Anon and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>
<i>Poverty and SGBV</i>	<i>Poverty and SGBV</i>	<i>Poverty and SGBV</i>	<i>Poverty and SGBV</i>	<i>Poverty and SGBV</i>
<b>Opening session</b>	<b>Protection Considerations session</b>	<b>Resilience and Inclusion Health session</b>	<b>Climate Action session</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safety of SGBV survivors, compliance with data protection standards, a survivor-centred approach &amp; increased engagement of women focal points. <i>(Q-Loise and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All issues related to energy access and prevention of risk of SGBV are addressed in our energy strategy. <i>(Q- GAT and R- UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>	
<b>THEME 6 HEALTH ISSUES</b>				
<i>Reproductive Health Care</i>	<i>Reproductive Health Care</i>	<i>Reproductive Health Care</i>	<i>Reproductive Health Care</i>	<i>Reproductive Health Care</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discrimination from health systems as the sexual and reproductive health/trans health needs seen as non-essential health services. <i>(Q- GAT)</i></li> </ul>		
<i>Increased psychosocial support</i>	<i>Increased psychosocial support</i>	<i>Increased psychosocial support</i>	<i>Increased psychosocial support</i>	<i>Increased psychosocial support</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNHCR efforts to address the increased mental health remotely for AGD groups <i>(Q-GAT &amp; R - UNHCR)</i></li> </ul>			

<i>Health needs of youth</i>	<i>Health needs of youth</i>	<i>Health needs of youth</i>	<i>Health needs of youth</i>	<i>Health needs of youth</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affected by school closures &amp; limited access to programs such as school-feeding and psycho-social support. (Q - Priscilla Ndegwa and R- UNHCR)</li> </ul>		



Gender Audit of meetings leading to the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees, the Global Refugee Forum and Pledging process and the 2020 High Commissioner's Dialogue

# **IMPACT AND EVALUATION OF THE GENDER AUDIT PROCESS 2017 – 2020**

**Gender Audit team: Shaza Al Rihawi, Andrea Ayala, Noor Azizah, Linda Bartolomei, Apajok Biar, Tina Dixon, Eileen Pittaway, Melika Sheik-Eldin, Hafsar Tameesuddin, Najeeba Wazefadost**

## EVALUATION OF THE OF THE GENDER AUDIT PROCESS, 2017 – 2020

### ***Gender Inclusion***

*In this report we have used the term “Gender inclusion” to refer to:*

- *an acknowledgement of, and response to, the different experiences of all women and girls, men and boys who are refugees, internally displaced or stateless*
- *the endemic sexual and gender- based violence experienced by the majority of all displaced women and girls, and some men and boys*
- *the major barriers to gender equality, and the participation of all women and girls from the local to the international*
- *the application of the previously adopted Age Gender and Diversity Policy 2018 (which includes acknowledgement of LGBTI Communities) by all key stakeholders at all levels, including UN staff, NGOs, CSOs, refugee-led organisations and major donors*
- *acknowledgment of the major contributions made by refugee women and refugee-led groups to their own and host communities, and as advocates at a local, national and international level*

### **SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS**

The Gender Audit Team is proud of its contribution to the successful inclusion of gender issues in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Pledging process which was an outcome of the Global Refugee Forum (GRF). It was really exciting to see the commitment to implement the promises made reflected in the outcomes of the 2020 High Commissioner’s Dialogue (HCD). The process has successfully modelled the multi-stakeholder approach to finding solutions, as, UNHCR, donors, INGOs, NGOs, CSOs, refugee-led organisations and committed individuals worked together and cooperatively to achieve the outcomes to date. The gender audit was a significant part of that process. While not claiming to be 100% successful, it has seen the practical application of AGD across key areas of concern, and a genuine acknowledgement of the extent and impact of sexual and gender-based violence on refugee women. The discourse has shifted from that of “gender sensitive” to “gender transformative”. The rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex communities had finally been recognised when the acronym LGBTI was openly spoken. The recognition of the key role of refugee-led, particularly refugee women-led, organisations, and the importance of refugee participation, which acknowledged the skills, knowledge, experience and professionalism of refugees, is a major step forward. The inclusion of refugee women and girls on panels has been respectful, not tokenistic. Excellent male gender champions have spoken loudly, challenging cultural barriers. Importantly it has seen a shift from some member states from the north being the main protagonists of gender inclusion, to a more universal picture, where many states from both the global south and the global north are championing gender inclusion. It has provided the opportunity for refugee women to meet informally, and on an equal footing as experts, with representatives of member states and other key stakeholders, and extensive feedback from those groups is that this was one of the more useful aspects of the gender audit process. This is due in no small part to the contribution of the refugee women who worked as part of the gender audit team. Coming from the five regions of the world, and with very different reasons for persecution and flight, they worked together as a cohesive group, sharing their experiences and expertise. Each one of them has extensive networks in their own diverse, and scattered communities, and are involved in a range of refugee-led organisations, providing direct assistance and working on advocacy strategies. It is this invaluable capacity and access to wider communities that they brought to the Gender Audit Process.

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## INTRODUCTION– HOW THE GENDER AUDIT PROCESS BEGAN

The Gender Audit of the Thematic Meetings and High Commissioner’s Dialogue, 2017 was instigated by Eileen Pittaway and Linda Bartolomei from the Forced Migration Research Network (FMRN), University of New South Wales (UNSW), Australia. They have worked together since 1997, conducting field research, advocating and collaborating with UNHCR to inform improved law, policy and tools to support the protection and inclusion of refugee women and girls. **During this time they have seen gender related issues and acknowledgement of the endemic sexual abuse endured by refugee women and girls be raised in key meetings, then slip off the negotiating table, time and time again.** As a result, in both policy and practice the needs of refugee women and girls are either completely overlooked or continue to be marginalised. Programs that do exist, which seek to address the gender dimensions of displacement, often operate in silos which fail to recognise the structural dimensions of gender inequality or are chronically under-funded.

### The New York Declaration

Due to continuing global concerns over the increasing mass movement of refugees and migrants, in 2016 the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) agreed to a set of commitments to improve the protection of refugees and migrants, as a shared global responsibility, in the [New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants](#). The Declaration set out a plan to further develop these commitments into what became the [Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) and a [Global Compact on Refugees](#).

This declaration outlined a comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) and tasked the UNHCR to build on it to develop a global compact on refugees for adoption at the 2018 UNGA. The New York Declaration commits to continued support for the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. It includes a strong set of commitments to refugee women and girls, including to promote their “full, equal and meaningful participation” in finding solutions, and a focus on an effective response to sexual and gender-based violence (UNGA 2016, 6). It was signed off by all UN Member States. The then UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner for Protection, Volker Turk, declared it was a minor miracle. Following two years of intense and extensive negotiations, the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration were adopted by the General Assembly at the end of 2018. Together, they set out the necessary actions to achieve the comprehensive response to refugees and migrants envisaged by the New York Declaration.

After years of advocacy, the strong recognition of the gendered nature of displacement outlined in the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, 2016, including the endemic risks of SGBV, provided a welcome critical window of opportunity to change this. The NYD was one of the first international policy frameworks to not only outline the gendered impacts of displacement and migration, but to include significant commitments to address these and, equally importantly, to recognise the central role that refugee and migrant women can and do play in developing and implementing solutions.

**While the New York Declaration was extremely strong on Gender recognition**, the draft CRRF was disappointingly weak. Based on previous experience, Pittaway and Bartolomei were concerned that once again the gender related issues would not be recognised and not be carried forward into the Global Compact on Refugees. Following a conversation with Volker Turk, Pittaway and Bartolomei were invited to submit an annotated version of the CRRF, which highlighted spaces where gender could be more comprehensively included. They did this, and also referenced each mention of gender related issues to all relevant UNHCR, other UN documents, and Human Rights policy and law which had already been adopted by Member States. The [resulting document](#), clearly demonstrated that **member states were not being asked to agree to anything new. They were only being requested to implement previously made commitments.**

As a result of this work, and at their suggestion, Pittaway and Bartolomei were commissioned to undertake a Gender Audit of the five thematic meetings including the 2017 HCD at which the debate about the text of the Global Compact on Refugees was finalised. The aim of the first Gender Audit in 2017 was to ensure that the strong gender commitments outlined in the NYD, but less clearly articulated in the CRRF, were fully integrated across the new Global Compact on Refugees.



Commissioned and funded by UNHCR's Divisions of International Protection and of Resilience and Solutions, a team came together, including five women from refugee backgrounds, resettled to developed countries, from the five UN designated regions of the world. The team were selected based on their strong commitment to gender equality, familiarity with the UN system and the UNHCR policy context, as well as their rich lived experience.

Following the successful audit of the 2017 meetings the team was invited to undertake further audits of the continuing process in 2019 and 2020. The core team of refugee women expanded to eight. They were supported by others who volunteered<sup>5</sup> to participate in key meetings, including the UNHCR/NGO consultations (2018-2020), the Consultations on the GCR (2018), the Global Refugee Forum (2019), and the 2020 High Commissioners Dialogue (HCD). The audit team documented the meetings following strict methods, drafted interventions, presented on panels, analysed content and co-authored the reports.

This report evaluates the success of the Gender Audits of:

- a. The High Commissioners Dialogue (2017); with a focus on the Global Compact on Refugees, and the five thematic meetings leading to this,
- b. The Global Forum on Refugees (2019), the three preparatory meetings for this event and the UNHCR/NGO Consultations,
- c. The five virtual meetings of the 2020 High Commissioner's Dialogue with a focus on pandemics and climate change.

While the team was not employed to undertake formal gender audits of the four consultations held during 2018 to finalise the draft of the GCR and the HCD 2018, they worked with NGO partners to audit the deliberations and co-author joint statements. With funding support from the Australian Government, Eileen Pittaway attended and informally audited the April Consultation and Linda Bartolomei attended the May Consultation. These joint activities contributed to gender inclusion in the final draft of the GCR. However, without a Gender Audit team at the 2018 HCD, there was little "gender Inclusion" in the reports of that meeting.

## **THE ROLE OF THE GENDER AUDIT TEAM**

The participation of the five (later eight) refugee women from each of the five UN regions on the auditing team, and their participation at the meetings, was funded by UNHCR and facilitated by the UNHCR CRRF Team and Gender Equality and SGBV Units. The team members were: Shaza Al Rihawi, Andrea Ayala, Noor Azizah, Apajok Biar, Tina Dixson, Melika Sheik-Eldin, Hafsar Tameesuddin, and Najeeba Wazefadost. For the first two gender audits they were not paid a salary for their work. The team documented and analysed the composition of panels, interventions by member states, UNHCR and other speakers, and compared these with the formal meeting notes to identify gender omissions and record gender recognition. They collected data on the gender mix of panels, and chairs, and the gender of those making interventions from the floor. Additionally, they made interventions in sessions and presented on panels. As the process continued, there was an increasing demand for their participation in a range of side and informal meetings.

Gender Audit team members not only committed to work in Geneva but, before they arrived, they consulted widely with their networks and brought current and priority issues of concern to include in their interventions and responses. They also had access to relevant people within UNHCR to whom they were able to present these issues. To ensure consistency and academic rigour, the team received online pre-training

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<sup>5</sup> Particular thanks to Charlotte Bell, Geraldine Doney, Effie Mitchell, Jasmine Shamim and Rachel Tan, who all provided essential support to the Gender Audit team at, or for key meetings over the past four years. Thanks also to the expanded team who assisted in documenting the 2019 UNHCR/NGO consultations: Kate Mahony, Women's Refugee Commission, Refugee youth from the Global Youth Advisory Council<sup>5</sup> (GYAC): Gabriela Ernestina Osorio Rodriguez, Ismael Gamboa Ocampo, Faridah Luanda, Hadjara Maikano Fadila, Abdulkarim Albrem, Arash Bordbar, Asif Safdary, Barthelémy Mwanza Ngane, Foni Joyce Vuni, Ibrahim Sallet Mahamat, Mariama Sow, Safia Ibrahimkhel, interpreters: Elizabeth Doyen and Giulia Pinheiro Maccini, and NGO representatives from Australia: Sitarah Mohammedi, Hayat Akbari, Sajjad Askary, Fadak Alfayadh, Leah Percival, MDA, and Nadine Liddy, MYAN.

and arrived in Geneva a full day before each meeting and were fully trained in the methodology. They stayed in the same hotel, and each day held breakfast meetings to prepare and dinner meetings to debrief after each day's work.

For the first dialogue and the Global Refugee Forum, the refugee women received their travel expenses and DSA for while they were in Geneva. For the 2020 HCD, which consisted of 5 virtual meetings, the work they undertook was recognised by payment of the hours of work they contributed. More than the money, what was most important to them was the recognition of the value of their work in the same way as other key stakeholders were recognised. They felt validated and respected for their input.

The GA Team worked closely with a wide range of gender champions. We would like to acknowledge the incredibly hard work and support of the UNHCR CRRF Team and Gender Equality, Community Development and SGBV Units, including, among others, UNHCR staff Rebecca Eapen, Joanina Karugaba, Ellen Hanson, Christine Friis Laustsen, Kirsten Valasek, Hanan Tabbara, Afarin Dadkhah Tehrani, Constanze Quosh, Sweta Madhuri Kannan, Perveen Ali and Daniel Endres; our NGO friends and partners Manisha Thomas, Women's Refugee Commission, Jerome Eli, ICVA, Enzo Tabet Cruz and Leslie Archambeault, PLAN International, Jessie Thompson, Care, Charlotte Stemmer, Oxfam, Tamara Domicelj and Carolina Gottardo, APPRN and all our friends at UNWomen; member state representatives including among others Catherine Gill and Hannah Birdsey (Australia), Carrie Lehmeier (Canada), as well as Caroline Sergeant (World Bank), and James Milner, (World Refugee Council). All threw their full support behind ensuring that gender recognition takes place and is implemented. As a group, we worked co-operatively supporting each other in the preparation of statements, interventions and recommendations, and in arranging a series of side meetings. The Government of Canada held an important informal meeting at their Geneva Mission on November 13<sup>th</sup> 2017, inviting 20 state, UN agency and NGO representatives, along with the Gender Audit team members to discuss strategies to support women and girls and AGD. This was followed on June 20<sup>th</sup> 2019, by an influential roundtable meeting hosted by the Australian Mission. The Government of Australia made funding available to enable two refugee women to attend the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.

The analysis to date indicates that the work undertaken by the GA Team and other gender champions leading up to the drafting of the GCR, led to significant gender-related content in the GCR, from a very low base in the CRRF. Work leading up to the GCR and the Pledging process resulted in a significant number of Pledges relating to the objectives. It is exceptionally pleasing to see this continuing into the discussions and promises made in the 2020 HCD.

The next logical step is a more forensic examination of the data, with the aim of contributing to an effective monitoring and evaluation strategy.

## **RATIONALE FOR THE GENDER AUDIT PROCESS**

As noted above, there were strong commitments related to gender equality and the rights of refugee women and girls in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. Sadly, these commitments reflect the reality that **law and policy developed over the past 30 years to address the protection needs of refugee women have not been fully implemented.** Over the years, focus on a policy of "mainstreaming" gender was not successful, as it did not highlight the different gendered needs, nor did it emphasise the extent of SGBV. Sadly, it was counterproductive and resulted in gendered issues being excluded from the discourse. **Refugee women were mainstreamed into oblivion. The inclusion of refugee women in meetings was usually tokenistic, and the focus was on them presenting "sad stories".**

However, women and girls are still suffering endemic rape and sexual abuse and lack access to many of the protection measures and durable solutions which should be available to all refugees. **Their voices are often silenced, their capacity ignored and their diversity unrecognised. While women's and girls' capabilities and social capital are devalued, 50% of the refugee population's contributions to solutions remain unrecognized.** Major obstacles to the provision of adequate responses to women and girls is the way in which they are designated in law and policy. These reflect both the political and ideological

positions of much policy and law and have an extremely detrimental impact on the protection of women and girls.

At least half of the total number of refugees in the world are women and girls. However, they are most often classified as a minority group, along with people with a disability, youth and children, members of the LGBTI community, the elderly and people from small ethnic groups or religions. **It is important to note that women and girls constitute 50% of all of these minority groups.** Women and girls are also categorized as a “vulnerable group” with an emphasis on personal vulnerability. However, **they are not inherently vulnerable, but the refugee experience places them in situations which create vulnerability.** Multiple levels of discrimination are inherent in the labels “minority” and “vulnerable” and compound the difficulties faced by women and girls.

A major protection issue for the majority of refugee women and girls is that of sexual and gender-based violence. This includes systematic rape in conflict and post-conflict situations, rape as a method of control of community and family destruction, rape of women as a punishment for or by men in a community, sexual assault, sexual torture, sexual slavery, trafficking, hate motivated rape of LGBTI identifying women, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and domestic violence. SGBV exists in all refugee situations and is a cause of flight, risk en-route, in countries of first asylum and often continues during resettlement. **It is THE major barrier for the participation and inclusion of all women and girls.**

**Despite the layers of discrimination faced by refugee women and girls, they are not just passive victims.** In many camps and refugee sites, women run crèches for children, arrange care for orphaned or lost children, provide safe spaces for women who have experienced sexual and gender-based violence, manage scarce rations to ensure that families are fed, run small businesses to provide some meagre additional support to their families, run basic schools, and provide protection such as the building of thorn fences to protect themselves. Much of this work is done without funding or external support. In the absence of men, women take on all roles in the family and community. **These activities are undertaken by women who hold both formal, but also a wide range of informal, skills and have a huge capacity.** They also have a keen analysis of the problems experienced in camps and potential solutions. In the resettlement countries, women are driving policy change in migration and asylum. **However, because of their minority status and discourses of vulnerability, their capacities, skills and abilities often go unrecognized.** The gender commitments in the GCR offered a new and exciting opportunity to address these issues. The Gender Audit was one strategy to contribute to their implementation.

## **AIMS OF THE GENDER AUDIT PROCESS**

As this was a dynamic and iterative process, the aims and objectives were expanded over the 5 years from the adoption of the New York Declaration.

### **The aim of the first Gender Audit (2017) was to:**

Support UNHCR’s efforts to ensure that the gender commitments outlined in the New York Declaration were fully integrated across the Global Compact on Refugees.

### **The Objectives were to:**

1. Change the discourse about refugee women from “minority and vulnerable”, to “equal and capable,
2. Effectively and systematically protect refugee women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence,
3. Generate political will to address the needs of refugee women and girls and to unlock the contribution they can make to providing solutions,

4. Address the vulnerabilities and barriers which prevent the full protection and inclusion of refugee women and girls,
5. Maximize strengths and capacity of refugee women and girls and ensure their self-representation and meaningful participation in all discussions and decision-making processes about themselves, their families and communities, short-term and long-term solutions at every level from the local to the international. *(Later with Objective 1)*

As the process continued, Objectives 1 and 5 were combined, and the Aim was expanded to include the Age, Gender and Diversity Policy, and the Pledging process. This followed the release of UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity policy in 2018. The announcement of the "Pledging process", a vehicle by which member states, donors and other key stakeholders were encouraged to make pledges relating to implementation of the many commitments made in the GCR as part of the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) 2019 was also included.

**The Aim for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gender Audit (2019) was to:**

- Ensure that the strong commitments to refugee women and girls, and to diverse groups in both the New York Declaration (2016) and the Global Compact on Refugees (2018) and the AGD Policy, are applied in all activities and that pathways for implementation be included in the Pledging process.

**Two further objectives were added.**

They were to:

5. Encourage reference and adherence to the UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Policy (AGD) which recognises the different needs of children, youth, women, the elderly, LGBTI communities, ethnic minorities. Indigenous groups and people with a disability. (Please note these categories are, in fact, cross cutting for example, a disabled elderly woman can also be a member of a minority ethnic group.)
6. Influence the Pledging process to ensure that the needs of women and girls, and all groups included in the AGD policy, were addressed in the pledges made.

The gender audit adopted an iterative learning process in which some focus and methodology was adapted in response to the outcomes of meetings and discussions, socio/political circumstances and emerging international issues. These include in particular the COVID-19 pandemic and the increasing urgency of conditions caused by climate change. These changes have strengthened the validity of the analysis of the findings, and the outcomes and recommendations of the Gender Audit reports provide a strong framework for action.

**The Aim for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Gender Audit (2020) was to:**

- Evaluate the application of these commitments in the response to COVID-19 pandemic and to future emergencies, including climate change.

During this next stage of the process the five objectives were further amended to include the more inclusive language adopted by UNHCR in the context of AGD, of referring to ALL women and girls, to emphasise that forcibly displaced people are diverse, and INCLUDE all ages, those who are LGBTI, people with disabilities, people from ethnic and religious minorities, and of Indigenous status etc., and to ensure that we are not "othering" particular groups by naming them or their needs as outside of the 'mainstream' refugee community.

**The revised Five Objectives were:**

1. change the discourse about refugee women from "minority and vulnerable", to "equal and capable, and maximize strengths and capacity of all refugee women and girls and ensure their

self-representation and meaningful participation in all discussions and decision-making processes about themselves, their families and communities, short term and long-term solutions at every level from the local to the international,

2. effectively and systematically protect all refugee women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence,
3. generate political will to address the needs of all refugee women and girls and to unlock the contribution they can make to providing solutions,
4. address the vulnerabilities and barriers which prevent the full protection and inclusion of all refugee women and girls,
5. Encourage reference and adherence to the UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Policy which recognises the different needs of children, youth, women, the elderly, LGBTI communities, ethnic minorities and indigenous groups and people with a disability. Including through influencing the pledging process to ensure that the needs of all women and girls, and all groups included in the AGD policy were addressed in the Pledges made. (Please note these categories are in fact cross cutting for example, a disabled elderly woman can also be a member of a minority ethnic group).

The results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Gender Audit have been compared to the outcomes of previous meetings which have had a Gender Audit and also against the Gender commitments made in the GCR, and the pledges made as part of the GRF process.

As detailed in this report, the gender audit process can be seen to have contributed significantly to fulfilment of these aims and objectives.

## **ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK**

An important function of the GA team was not just to document and count references to gender inclusion, but also to analyse the process, and comment on how and why progress was made. The main theory used was that of intersectionality, along with a strong Human Rights framework, and community development theory. **Intersectionality is a theory that seeks to examine how various socially and culturally constructed categories, such as gender, age groupings, race, class, disability, sexuality, and other identity labels interact and contribute to systematic inequality.** Intersectionality holds that the layers of oppression and discrimination which prevent people accessing their human rights do not act independently of one another. Attitudes, systems and structures in society and organisations can interact to create inequality and result in exclusion. Experiences of discrimination compound the effects of other discriminations suffered by refugee women and girls thus reducing their ability to access many of their rights. They cannot be alleviated by stand-alone solutions. This is at the core of UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity Policy. However, despite the concerted efforts of many service providers, including civil society and UN Agencies, and significant advances in law and policy over the past 30 years to address the protection needs of refugee women and girls, they are still not effectively addressed. **Diverse groups are often not explicitly mentioned, and the gender cross-cut in all groups not acknowledged. The analysis sought to identify why, and to suggest solutions.**

## PROCESS AND OUTCOMES FROM THE THREE GENDER AUDITS AND THE 2018 HCD

### THE 1<sup>ST</sup> GENDER AUDIT: HCD 2017

#### **Summary Report of the Gender Audit of the Five Thematic Meetings and the HCD 2017 which informed the Drafting of the Global Compact on Refugees 2017** *(Full report)*

*'We should not mainstream gender into oblivion - it should be exactly the opposite.  
We take it to heart and want to bring it forward.'*

-Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 13 December 2017

It was noted that, while gender and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were rarely mentioned in the first Thematic Meetings, and rates of female participation on panels was low, this had changed dramatically by the HCD, where there was gender equity across panels, and that gender equality, and SGBV and the need to acknowledge diversity, including LGBTI communities, were included in all discussions.

Key findings of the analysis were: that if gender equality and the different issues experienced by women and girls, men and boys, are merely assumed, then they are not addressed; that the mere addition of the word "gender" in a sentence, or the continued reference to women and girls as part of vulnerable minorities, simultaneously hides and fails to address the lack of gender equality; that the enormous capacity and capability of refugee women is not utilised either locally or internationally; that SGBV has become just another acronym in a list of acronyms, and the devastating impact of endemic rape, sexual and gender-based violence, both as a cause of gender inequality and a major barrier to the achievement of gender equality, is not recognised; that too often women and girls are "mainstreamed to oblivion", and their specific protection needs are not fully addressed; that if data is not *sex, age, disability* and, where possible, *diversity disaggregated*, the different experiences and needs of women and girls, men and boys, including within the LGBTI community, the elderly and people with a disability are not identified, nor addressed; that gender-sensitive accountability measures, monitoring and evaluation are a critically important part of the delivery of effective protection and must be included in all aspects of protection responses; that the High Commissioner's 2001 five commitments to refugee women must be operationalised throughout the GCR's Program of Action; and that these issues are intersectional and cannot be addressed in isolation.

Due in part of the work of the GA Team, the discourse and debate changed significantly over the course of the year. Many participants, including representatives of member states, UNHCR and other UN staff and donors commented on the high quality of the presentations and analysis of the refugee women on the Gender Audit team and that it had influenced their perception of gender issues. The GA team also worked particularly closely with the Youth groups, and two women from the GA Team provided a gender sensitivity awareness raising session to the Global Youth Advisory Council (GYAC) team before the GCR.

### **CONSULTATIONS FOR THE GCR AND THE HCD 2018**

As noted above, while the team was not employed to undertake formal gender audits of the GCR Consultation meetings, they worked with NGO partners to audit the deliberations and co-author joint statements. With funding support from the Australian Government, Eileen Pittaway attended and informally audited the April Consultation and Linda Bartolomei attended the May Consultation.

A Gender Audit was also not done for the 2018 High Commissioners Dialogue, which was organised around the areas of focus in the Global Compact on Refugees, that sought to broaden the focus of discussions to encompass both humanitarian and development perspectives on displacement in urban areas. It included contributions from many different stakeholders working with refugees in urban settings. After all of the work to ensure a strong Gender focus in the GCR, it was extremely disappointing that the advance agenda for this meeting was completely gender blind. It was only at the instigation of one of our NGO partners that a research report previously prepared by Pittaway on gender issues in Urban Areas was referenced as a resource document. This highlights the crucial role that the Gender Audit team has since 2017 to ensure that

both the agenda and the outcomes of these high-level meetings are gender inclusive. The outcomes from the 2018 HCD informed the Preparatory meetings for the Global Refugee Forum, 2019.

It is noteworthy that the summary reports of the sessions across the HCD (2018), which was not gender audited, included only very limited references to gender issues. The overall summary report is completely gender blind and there are only two references to the importance of the applying an age, gender and diversity lens, and one reference to the particular vulnerabilities of LGBTI communities, in the summary reports of the Thematic sessions. There were NO references to either gender equality or SGBV in any of the session reports. It could be argued that this was not important as gender was included in the GCR. The counter argument is that if it had been discussed and debated by key stakeholders at the HCD, and more strongly championed by UNHCR, there would have been stronger ownership of, and funding commitments to, the issue.

## **2<sup>ND</sup> GENDER AUDIT: THE GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM, 2019**

### **Summary report of the Gender Audit of The Global Refugee Forum – Including 3 Preparatory Meetings and the Annual UNHCR/ NGO Consultations 2019**

*([Full report](#))*

Following the successful interventions of the GA Team leading up to the adoption of the GCR, they were once again invited to audit the three preparatory meetings for, and the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), 2019. This included a Gender Audit of the Annual UNHCR Consultations with NGOs which in 2019 was focused on the GRF. A similar auditing model was used and, as noted above, the aims and objectives were broadened to include the AGD Framework and the Pledging process.

#### **The UNHCR/NGO Consultations**

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 SGBV were strong and consistent throughout many of the sessions. It was clear that the majority of the NGO community was taking this very seriously, and many committed to continue with strong advocacy to member states in the lead up to the GRF. The team was also very encouraged to hear strong support from so many 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. Most significantly 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. It was also 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. While significant moves forward had been achieved there was still a long way to go.

#### **The Global Refugee Forum and Preparatory Meetings**

The aim of the Gender Audit of the three preparatory meetings and the Global Refugee Forum was to advocate for, and to monitor how many of, the commitments in the GCR were reflected in the pledges made by key stakeholders, which focused on the implementation of the GCR. At the request of UNHCR Division of International Protection (Gender Equality Unit), the focus was expanded to include and promote the UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Policy, adopted in 2018 and incorporating the revised five commitments made to refugee women and girls by High Commissioner Rudd Lubbers in 2001. Once again, the refugee women in

the gender team were a powerful presence and made a strong impact on proceedings through their reporting, analysis, and their interventions and presentations. There was a significant presence of refugees representing other groups, and they also chaired sessions, sat on panels and made excellent interventions.

While there was continued support from a number of NGOs and member states and from individuals within “the house”, the GA Team noted their disappointment at the apparent lack of support for the recognition of gender by senior staff at UNHCR, including reluctance to encourage application of their excellent Age, Gender and Diversity Policy. Inclusiveness of gender and SGBV, not just from INGOs and UNHCR divisions dedicated to women, girls, response to SGBV and the AGD Framework, but from a much wider group of key stakeholders. This can be seen below in the analysis of the number of pledges in Table 1 which address aspects of gender inclusion.

As a contribution to strengthening gender input into the process of planning for the GRF, the Australian Mission hosted an Informal discussion and a Roundtable Meeting on Gender. The first Informal discussion was held on 20<sup>th</sup> June before the preparatory meeting, and the second roundtable on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, two weeks later. The first meeting was attended by four member states, four UNHCR staff and Dr Linda Bartolomei, UNSW. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the Concept paper developed by the UNSW team on possible gender commitments and sponsorship approaches for the GRF. The concept paper drew on UNSW’s gender audit of the GCR consultations, which involved refugee women from diverse regions of the world. The aim of the second meeting was to build on the outcomes of the Preparatory meeting and to contribute to the sponsorship groups and the Pledging process. It was attended by a range of States, UNHCR, NGO and refugee representatives. [Snapshot fliers](#) and a [Tip sheet](#) were circulated, and three audit team members made powerful presentations. These were all well received by states and UN agencies present. One member state participant reflected that it had helped them think about the gendered dimensions and would help shape the representative’s advice to their capital.

A full gender analysis of the Pledges was undertaken following the GRF. This analysis and list of gender inclusive Pledges is available [here](#).

### **3<sup>RD</sup> GENDER AUDIT: 2020 HIGH COMMISSIONERS DIALOGUE**

Early in 2020 Pittaway and Bartolomei were approached by the UNHCR Gender Equality Unit to ask if they would be interested in conducting an audit of the 2020 HCD. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the dialogue was to be held over a series of virtual meetings hosted on ZOOM. Six of the women who had worked on previous gender audits joined the team, and strategies for completing the audit “on-line” were quickly developed. To ensure consistency and academic rigour, the team was trained to ensure that the same methods were consistently used over the meetings. Zoom preparatory meetings and debriefing sessions were held for the team between each of the HCD meetings. The team members were: Shaza Al Rihawi, Andrea Ayala, Apajok Biar, Tina Dixson, Hafsar Tameesuddin, and Najeeba Wazefadost.

#### **Summary of the High Commissioners Dialogue 2020 (Including the UNHCR/ NGO Consultations) with a focus on the COVID-19 pandemic**

*(Full report)*

##### **Impact of the virtual sessions format**

The nature of the virtual sessions of course had a major impact on the HCD 2020, and this included the function of the Gender Audit Team who did not have a physical presence at the meetings. However, they were omnipresent in the Zoom Q and A and submitted well researched questions in advance for consideration by presenters.

In previous dialogues, there have often been lively and informative interventions from member states, which have given strong indications of where they sit in terms of recognising the importance of the AGD framework, and what additional support and information is needed to enable this to happen more broadly. It was difficult to gauge the impact of the Gender Audit on key stakeholders in the 2020 HCD. A recent



indication from the World Bank of their interest in the analysis of the Gender Audit team is a good indication that it was positive. The other positive consequence of the online format enabled a far greater degree of participation from those in the Global South.

If we focus on the content of most meetings there was strong support for gender inclusion. While the interactive nature of face-to-face meetings was missing, one advantage of the virtual format was that people from around the world were able to participate, both as panellists and as audience, and questions could be submitted via the web. Many of those posted in advance were answered during the sessions by the panellists. UNHCR must be congratulated for their organisation and their prompt and thorough responses to the majority of questions posted on the Zoom Q and A during the session.

There was gender parity on panels and across the Dialogue. Refugees were treated with respect and invited to contribute their analysis and recommendations, not just to share sad stories. The refugee presenters demonstrated a sophisticated analysis of the problems facing refugee communities, and solutions, and discussed the power of community to address problems. We applaud the very strong role taken by some chairs who asked pertinent questions to ensure that the sessions were gender inclusive.

In his opening address, Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees spoke strongly about what he hoped the meeting would achieve for refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons and ensured that a gender lens and analysis was applied throughout the Dialogue. What was outstanding in four of the five sessions of the HCD 2020 and the UNHCR/NGO Consultations was the very strong leadership on Gender and AGD from UNHCR senior staff. Of particular note was the clear articulation of the need to move from a “Gender Sensitive” approach to a “Gender Transformative” approach and a clear articulation of the rights of LGBTI communities to be included as equals.

In particular we congratulate the High Commissioner Filippo Grandi, Assistant High Commissioner Gillian Triggs, Deputy High Commissioner Kelly Clements, and Mr Andrew Harper, special advisor on Climate Action for their frank analysis of gender and SGBV as central to the debate. While speaking specifically to climate action, the contributions made by Andrew are equally relevant to challenges across the board. Framed in the context of the importance of trust to achieve our collective goals, they acknowledged the rise in SGBV during COVID-19, and its impacts, including being forced to sell or exchange sex for goods or services, and the imperative to address these issues.

Other major contributors to the success of gender inclusion in the 2020 HCD were the quality of the chairing of some sessions, and not only the number of times gender issues were mentioned, but the particularly thoughtful and analytical ways in which they were addressed by a number of presenters.

## **OUTCOMES OF THE KEY MEETINGS AGAINST THE AIMS OF THE GENDER AUDIT TO DATE**

In order to assess whether the aims of the Gender Audit were achieved, the outcomes achieved from each of the three Gender Audits have been mapped against the Audits’ 6 objectives. The outcomes of this mapping are attached in Annexe 1. The findings provide strong evidence of the progress made from the first Gender Audit in 2017 to the current 2020 Gender Audit.

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF GENDER INCLUSION AGAINST THE AIMS OF THE GENDER AUDIT IN THE GCR 2017, THE PLEDGES 2019 AND THE HCD 2020**

<b>Objectives – Gender Audit</b>	<b>Global Compact on Refugees</b>	<b>Pledges GRF</b>	<b>2020 HCD</b>
<b>1. Change the discourse about from “minority and vulnerable” to “equal and capable” and maximise strengths and capacity of all refugee women and girls, and ensure their representation and meaningful participation</b>	<b>Total Mentions – 7</b>	<b>Total Mentions – 34</b>	<b>Total Mentions in the sessions – 36</b>  <b>Total Mentions in the Zoom Q and A – 26</b>
<b>Objectives – Gender Audit</b>	<b>Global Compact on Refugees</b>	<b>Pledges GRF</b>	<b>2020 HCD</b>

<b>2. Effectively and systematically protect all refugee women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 8</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 26</b>	<b>Total Mentions in sessions - 35</b>  <b>Total Mentions in the Zoom Q and A - 11</b>
<b>Objectives - Gender Audit</b>	<b>Global Compact on Refugees</b>	<b>Pledges GRF</b>	<b>2020 HCD</b>
<b>4. Address the vulnerabilities and barriers which prevent the protection and full inclusion of all refugee women and girls</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 23</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 29</b>	<b>Total Mentions in the sessions - 85</b>  <b>Total Mentions in the Zoom Q and A - 35</b>
<b>Objectives - Gender Audit</b>	<b>Global Compact on Refugees</b>	<b>Pledges GRF</b>	<b>2020 HCD</b>
<b>5. Encourage reference and adherence to the UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Policy</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 22</b>	<b>Total Mentions - 40</b>	<b>Total Mentions in the Sessions - 33</b> <b>Total Mentions in the Zoom Q and A - 16</b>

The key findings for each objective are briefly outlined below:

**Objective 1: Change the discourse about refugee women from “minority and vulnerable”, to “equal and capable to maximize strengths and capacity of all refugee women and girls and ensure their self-representation and meaningful participation in all discussions and decision-making processes about themselves, their families and communities, short term and long-term solutions at every level from the local to the international (Original Objectives 1 and 5 combined).**

The GCR (2018) contains seven paragraphs which clearly demonstrate the very positive progress made in changing the discourse to recognise the strengths and capacity of refugee women and girls. Collectively, these paragraphs outline the importance of ensuring support for Gender equality, women’s leadership, meaningful engagement, inclusion and participation of refugee women and girls. Most significantly, while still acknowledging that some women and girls face situations which create vulnerability, none of the gender inclusive paragraphs in the GCR characterise refugee women and girls as a minority or as inherently vulnerable (GCR, Para 51). Pleasingly the Pledges made at, and following, GRF, significantly build on this progress. A total of 34 Pledges across the areas of Education, Solutions, Protection Capacity, Jobs and Livelihoods and Responsibility Sharing include strong and empowering language and commitments to gender equality and the meaningful inclusion and leadership of women and girls. The diversity of the member states and organisations who made gender-inclusive pledges also highlights significant and important progress. Of note were the gendered pledges made by member states who have not traditionally been included among the state gender champions. These included El Salvador, Lithuania, Turkey, South Korea and Zimbabwe. The analysis of the 2020 High Commissioners Dialogue indicates sustained and increased progress in this area. Across the five sessions of the HCD there were 36 references, in the Zoom Q and A, 26 references which directly addressed this objective. Included was the ground-breaking call to move from “Gender Sensitive” as a guiding principle, to that of “Gender Transformative”. The genuine recognition of the value of the work by refugee women-led groups and organisations, often as first responders, supporting both their own and host communities, was also strongly highlighted. For the first time

there was strong recognition of the important role that LGBTI-led groups play in supporting community-based protection efforts.

## **Objective 2: Effectively and systematically protect all refugee women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence**

Between 2017 and 2020 significant progress is evident not only in the acknowledgement of the magnitude of the problem of SGBV faced by all refugee and displaced women and girls, but in the structural and intersectional causes. The Global Compact on Refugees (2018) contains paragraphs which clearly acknowledge and commit to addressing all forms of SGBV, and while this represents significant progress, the document fails to explicitly mention some of the most pervasive forms of abuse which increase, and are compounded by conflict and displacement. For example, there are no mentions of child or forced marriage, being forced to sell or exchange sex, domestic and intimate partner violence or of the importance of access to reproductive services and rights. These critical gaps were, however, addressed by several of the 26 Pledges which relate to this objective as well as during the 2020 HCD. There are several pledges which explicitly address the problems of child marriage and intimate partner violence and the need for reproductive health services. Each of these issues was also discussed across the 2020 HCD, most significantly because all have increased significantly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Importantly, this highlights the critical lessons that must be learned from the COVID – 19 emergency to take forward into future SGBV responses and programming.

There were 35 references to different aspects of SGBV during the 2020 HCD and 11 references in the Zoom Q and A. These address a range of subthemes including poverty and the economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls, problems facing LGBTI communities, vulnerability to early/child/forced marriage, shelter and access to justice for women victims of SGBV. Importantly, this demonstrates the progress that has been achieved in having the intersectionality of issues recognised.

## **Objective 3: Generate political will to address the needs of all refugee women and girls and to unlock the contribution they can make to providing solutions.**

As evidenced by the Gender reports from the HCD 2020 as well as previous meetings, the Gender Audit Process has been a successful and worthwhile exercise which has contributed significantly to a real recognition and inclusion of gender-related issues into the GCR, the implementation of the commitments made to refugee women and girls, and to diverse groups in that document. The adoption of the comprehensive Age, Gender and Diversity Framework and Policy in 2018 was an important step forward. It includes a very welcome and long overdue updated version of the 2001 High Commissioner's Five Commitments to refugee women and girls, (due in no small part to the indefatigable advocacy of Jessie Thomson, Care Canada). Commitment to gender equality was evident in the increasing inclusion of women and girls on Panels and as session chairs across the meetings. The recognition and support given to the participation of refugee women and girls, including their inclusion on panels and payment for their work on the 2020 HCD, moved the discourse from one of tokenism to inclusion. Open acknowledgement of the extent of SGBV experienced by refugee women and girls, as well as some men and boys, and inclusion of the needs LGBTI communities, and the urgency for increased programs for survivors of SGBV was increasingly articulated over the five years, in particular in the 2020 HCD. Key gender champions from within UNHCR, as well as several key states, NGOs and refugee women leaders played a central role in generating the political will needed for change. It was also important to see that the gender champions in the process were not only female. In order, we thank Volker Turk, High Commissioner Filippo Grandi, Daniel Endres, Arafat Jamal, Andrew Harper (UNHCR), and Jerome Eli and Ignacio Packer (ICVA). Particular thanks to, Ellen Hanson, Deputy High Commissioner Kelly Clements and Assistant High Commissioner Gillian Triggs (UNHCR) and Catherine Gill and Carrie Lehmeier from the Australian and Canadian Missions for hosting gender roundtables at critical intervals during the process. Not least we acknowledge the enormous contributions of all of the refugee women, youth and men who worked tirelessly across the meetings to champion the rights of all women and girls.

#### **Objective 4: Address the vulnerabilities and barriers which prevent the full protection and inclusion of all refugee women and girls**

There are 23 paragraphs in the GCR which identify barriers to women and girls' protection and inclusion. These include economic, educational, health, SGBV, gender inequality, as well as lack of access to safe spaces, justice and legal registration. 29 Pledges outline a series of commitments and actions to address many of these barriers. Most importantly these include pledges to address several of the key gaps in the GCR, in particular its lack of reference to reproductive health and rights or to menstrual hygiene materials. The 2020 HCD significantly expands on what has been achieved and confirms the significant progress made in recognising the intersectionality of issues and barriers. There were 85 references to barriers to women's and girls' inclusion across the sessions of the 2020 HCD and 35 in the Zoom Q and A. Building on the barriers listed in the GCR, the additional barriers of lack of access to technology for women and girls, to reproductive health care, to psycho-social support and the particular problems facing LGBTI communities, were identified. The Intersectionality of barriers for women was also clearly identified as an issue in its own right.

#### **Objective 5: Encourage reference and adherence to and the UNHCR Age Gender and Diversity Policy which recognises the different needs of children, youth, women, the elderly, LGBTI communities, ethnic minorities and indigenous groups and people with a disability. Including through influencing the pledging process to ensure that the needs of all women and girls, and all groups included in the AGD policy were addressed in the Pledges made. (Please note these categories are in fact cross-cutting for example, a disabled elderly woman can also be a member of a minority ethnic group.)**

The Age, Gender and Diversity Policy is explicitly mentioned in four paragraphs of the GCR however an additional 18 paragraphs clearly apply an AGD approach. These additional paragraphs include direct recognition of the way in which issues and barriers affect different groups including based on age, gender, disability and other axes of diversity. The Pledging process clearly built on the momentum created by the AGD Policy, as well as the direct advocacy of the Gender Audit Team, Women's Refugee Commission, Plan International and Care to ensure that an AGD lens was reflected. In total 40 Pledges across all 6 pledging areas demonstrate the application of an AGD lens. Most significantly, a number include direct recognition of the particular needs of LGBTI communities. There were 33 references to AGD considerations across the sessions of the 2020 HCD and 16 in the Zoom Q and A. Disappointingly, while there was clear recognition of gender and diversity issues, the AGD policy was rarely mentioned.

#### **THE IMPACT OF THE GENDER AUDIT TEAM**

The success of the Gender Audit team is due both to the knowledge, experience and commitment which they brought to the task. The professionalism of their work, and the bravery they display, speaking out loudly in spaces where women from diverse backgrounds have previously been seldom seen or heard. Two of the team noted that at times they had risked their lives as they worked as advocates for the women in their communities. It is also due to the space provided to them by UNHCR. The team has had a very visible presence, with their own "Flags" in each session, and the opportunity to ask questions and make interventions from the floor. They were also included in panels, and chaired sessions. At the GRF they were given the opportunity to present their analyses and conclusions in the closing session.

At an informal level, they were able to meet with other delegates at receptions, during coffee and lunch breaks, and they made the most of these times to answer questions, clarify and expand the information they had presented in the formal sessions. Feedback from representatives of member states, UNHCR staff and other civil society participants indicate that this was very successful, and their presence and informed and professional approach were very powerful.

In the virtual sessions, this was not possible, and the only way that they could contribute was by submitting questions in advance and via the Zoom Q and A function. As a team, they carefully considered the issues they wanted to raise and carefully structured their questions to ensure a useful response. While a very different experience, they are confident that their voices were heard. Thanks also to the UNHCR organising team for giving them a slot in the Fishbowl exercise in the closing session.

Based on analysis to date we can say with confidence that the Gender Audit process and the team of committed refugee women had a significant impact on the inclusion of gender-related issues over time. We would argue that these figures suggest that significant political will (objective 3) was generated by the Gender Audit Process (working in tandem with many others) to produce significant trends in the inclusion and response to gender issues and the endemic SGBV experienced by refugee women and girls. It is noteworthy that the summary reports of the sessions across the HCD (2018), which was not gender audited, included only very limited references to gender issues. The overall summary report is completely gender blind and there are only two references to the importance of applying an age, gender and diversity lens, and one reference to the particular vulnerabilities of LGBTI communities in the summary reports of the Thematic sessions. There were NO references to either gender equality or SGBV in any of the session reports.

## **REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESS AND VALUE OF THE GENDER AUDITS**

The process of fighting for the comprehensive inclusion of Gender in the GCR and the Pledging process via the Gender Audit was a roller coaster ride with many highs and lows, but increasingly, with very positive outcomes. We must note that the GA Team in no way claims sole credit for the enormous steps forward in Gender recognition which we have seen over the past five years, but we are proud to have been an active part of that process. As often happens, change came through co-operation and respect for different approaches to addressing problems.

From the perspective of the GA team, the process has been a successful and worthwhile exercise, which has contributed significantly to a real recognition and inclusion of gender related issues into GCR, and the implementation of the commitments made to refugee women and girls, and to diverse groups in that document. Moving from nearly always “slipping off the table”, gender, women and girls are now front and centre. The progress can be seen in the Matrix, Annexe 1, in the increasingly meaningful content of presentations on panels and the move away from tokenism and mainstreaming to gender transformation. It is evidenced in the promises made in the Pledging process which was an important part of the GRF, and the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and the inclusion of strong examples of good practice and recommendations.

Of particular note is the role increasingly played by UNHCR, including the commissioning of the Gender Audit, which was a brave step, as it was obvious that there would be criticism of “The House”. The adoption of the comprehensive Age, Gender and Diversity Policy in 2018 was an important step forward. It includes a very welcome and long overdue updated version of the 2001 High Commissioners Five Commitments to refugee women and girls. The call at the 2020 HCD to move from “Gender Sensitive” as a guiding principle, to that of “Gender Transformative” was ground-breaking.

## **UNEXPECTED OUTCOMES FROM THE AUDIT PROCESS**

- An indirect value was the informal discussions between members of the audit team and key stakeholders including member states.
- The refugee women were invited to participate in a number of fora related to the GRF. At the closing ceremony, they announced the Launch of the Global Independent Refugee Women Leaders (GIRWL), a refugee women-led advocacy group fighting for the rights of refugee women and girls.
- Bartolomei and Pittaway have been in discussion with the World Bank Gender Unit in relation to the research currently being undertaken by the World Bank on gender issues and the Research Team will be talking with the refugee women from the Gender Audit team early 2021.
- Following the GRF, Pittaway and Bartolomei were commissioned to write the World Refugee (and Migration) Council Gender policy paper.

- Gender Audit team representatives were invited and paid to lead a session in the 2020 APRRN short course on effective advocacy.
- During informal meetings with member states and other key stakeholders and in interventions made by them, the comment was often made that while they were committed to address gender inclusion, they did not know how to because as they said “*One size does not fit all*”. In response to this, in 2018, Pittaway and Bartolomei were granted significant funding from the Australian Government to undertake research in Thailand, Burma, Bangladesh and Malaysia, to monitor and evaluate the gender commitments in the GCR to examine how the principle to guide gender recognition could be implemented differently to suit local circumstances but achieve a similar result. That work, which will be finalised in 2021, is producing promising models which we hope will be useful internationally<sup>6</sup>. They hope to present their findings at the commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Refugee Convention, 2021.

Gender Audit Reports for all meetings can be found [here](#).

## CONCLUSIONS

As noted above, full details of the whole process can be found in the reports from each meeting. The (very exhausted) audit team is extremely pleased at the results of their work over the five-year period. It has been difficult, at times extremely frustrating, but overall satisfying and rewarding. The team firmly believes that their work has made a difference and contributed to the full inclusion of gender related issues in the GCR and GRF Forum. The tragic trajectory of the COVID-19 pandemic has only proved their contention that, with minimal support and resources, refugees are more than capable of suggesting and implementing solutions for their communities, and importantly contributing positively to host communities. One of the biggest barriers to this happening is entrenched attitudes based on assumptions of the lack of capacity, particularly of women refugees, and the fear that refugee-led groups will not be accountable. As both Filippo Grandi and Andrew Harper (UNHCR), stated very strongly, to fully exploit the capacity and knowledge of women refugees we have to move beyond gender sensitive to gender transformative. To overcome the top-down approach of “we know best what they need”, we have to move away from patriarchal models of service provision to inclusive relationships built on trust and respect.

### **Are we on the move from rhetoric to reality?**

The rhetoric of recognition has improved significantly. The inclusion of refugee women and men has moved from tokenistic and has acknowledged their strengths and knowledge. The notion of “Mainstreaming” women, girls and gender into oblivion has been transformed into a genuine acknowledgement of their different needs and capacities. Whether this translates to significant action on the ground remains to be seen. There are promising indications that this is happening, but, as yet, there has been no formal evaluation of the process.

### **Next Steps**

While the work of the GA Team officially terminated with the submission of the final report of the 2020HCD, we are committed to continue the process. Pittaway and Bartolomei have already completed an analysis of the Gender Commitments in the GCR against the pledges made following the GRF 2019 and IF FUNDING CAN BE IDENTIFIED, will undertake a more forensic analysis of the outcomes and commitments made in the HCD 2020 against these, with the aim of informing an effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation process of all gender-related pledges. This will build on this evaluation.

This process has demonstrated that refugee women are not just tellers of sad stories which highlight the problems. They are not just part of the solutions. They are the key to the solutions, and if this key is not used, we lose over 50% of the capacity which refugee communities can contribute to finding answers to the challenges we are facing.

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<sup>6</sup> Findings to date can be found at: [Refugee Women and Girls: | Arts & Social Sciences - UNSW Sydney](#)

## ANNEXE 1: GENDER INCLUSION AGAINST THE AIMS OF THE GENDER AUDIT IN THE GCR 2018, THE PLEDGES 2019 AND THE HCD 2020

NOTE: as the Paragraphs in the GCR, the Pledges and the Subthemes from the 2020 HCD often address several objectives they are counted against each relevant objective. Once again this demonstrates the intersectionality of both the barriers to gender equality, age, gender and diversity approaches and to addressing SGBV, and the importance of intersectional responses.

Objectives – Gender Audit	Global Compact on Refugees	Pledges GRF	2020 HCD
<p><b>1. Change the discourse from “minority and vulnerable” to “equal and capable” and maximise strengths and capacity of all refugee women and girls, and ensure their representation and meaningful participation</b></p>	<p><b>Total Mentions – 7</b></p> <p><b>Paragraphs 13, 34, 40,51, 74, 75, 106</b></p> <p><b>Key words included:</b>            Gender equality            Meaningful engagement/participation            Leadership            Inclusive            Community strengths            Input from those with diverse needs and potential vulnerabilities (para 51)</p>	<p><b>Total Mentions - 34</b></p> <p><b>Education related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-1. UNITAR: “gender parity”, “gender equality”, “gender responsive”</li> <li>- 2. Young Coach Education: “empower young women”, “women to become social role models and community leaders”</li> <li>- 3. Plan International: “inclusive”, “equal opportunity”, “non-discrimination”, (2<sup>nd</sup> one) “gender-transformative education”</li> <li>-4. PlanBornefonden Denmark: “gender transformative”, “combat gender-related barriers”, “inclusive”</li> <li>-5. PlanBornefonden and Danish GRC: “gender-sensitive”</li> <li>- 6. UN Women: “second chance education for refugee women”</li> <li>-7. Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies: “marginalised girls”, “inclusive”, “gender-responsive”</li> <li>- Rwanda: “equitable access”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Total Mentions in the Sessions – 36</b>  <b>Total Mentions in the Zoom Q and A – 26</b></p> <p><b>Subthemes included:</b>            Safe Livelihoods            The need for Gender Transformative approaches            Gender Equality            The importance of refugee-led organisations            The importance of Inclusion, (macro and micro)            Refugee Women as first responders, COVID-19 and Climate change            Age, Gender and Diversity policy, (also modelled by composition of panels)            Problems facing LGBTI communities            Women with a disability</p>

		<p>- Save the Children: “marginalised”, equitable teacher and student outcomes”</p> <p><b>Solutions related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <p>-8. Act for Peace: “women’s empowerment”, “gender equity”, “leadership and meaningful participation”</p> <p>-9. Lithuania: “social participation”, “displaced women”</p> <p>- 10. Greek Forum of Refugees: “refugee-led”</p> <p><b>Protection Capacity related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <p>- 11. APRRN and APNOR: “inclusive”, “meaningful participation and leadership of women”</p> <p>-12. Care International: “refugee participation”, voice of women and girls”</p> <p>-13. Germany: “participation of women”, “voice”, “visibility of women”</p> <p>- 14. Women Deliver: “Women-Focused Civil Society Organisations”, “women-focused”</p> <p>- 15. Terre des Hommes: “equality”, “leadership skills”, “integration”</p> <p>- 16. Forced Migration Research Network: “women-led”</p> <p>-17. Call to Action on GBV in emergencies: “gender equality, “gender inequality”</p> <p>- 18. Plan International: “gender inequality”</p> <p>-19. Dept of International Refugee Law: “gender balance”</p>	
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Objectives – Gender Audit	Global Compact on Refugees	Pledges GRF	2020 HCD
<p><b>2. Effectively and systematically Protect all refugee women and girls’ from sexual and gender-based violence</b></p>	<p><b>Total Mentions - 8</b></p> <p>Paragraphs 13, 51, 58 ,60, 72, 75, 76, 92,</p> <p><b>Key words included:</b></p> <p>All forms of SGBV</p>	<p><b>Total Mentions - 26</b></p> <p><b>Energy and Infrastructure related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1. Mexico: “voluntary termination of pregnancy for rape”</li> <li>- 2. Water Mission: “safe water access”</li> <li>- 3. PlanBornefonden Denmark: “adolescent pregnancy”, “contraceptives”, “comprehensive sexuality education”</li> </ul> <p><b>Education related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4. Sweden: “gender-based violence”</li> </ul> <p><b>Solutions related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5. International Catholic Migration Commission: “women and girls at risk”, “Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Protection Experts”, “SGBV”</li> <li>- Somalia: “GBV”, “marriage”</li> </ul> <p><b>Protection Capacity related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6. UNFPA: “survivors”, “GBV”, “at-risk women and girls”, “GBV survivors”</li> <li>- 7. Ethiopia: “SGBV prevention”</li> <li>- Women Deliver: “gender-based violence”</li> <li>- 8. RET International: “gender-based violence”</li> <li>- 9. 26 States/12 NGOs UNSW/UNFPA/: “SRHR services”, “SGBV”, “sexual and</li> </ul>	<p><b>Total Mentions in the Sessions – 35</b></p> <p><b>Total Mentions in the Zoom Q and A – 11</b></p> <p><b>Subthemes included:</b></p> <p>The economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls</p> <p>Safe Livelihoods</p> <p>Problems facing LGBTI communities</p> <p>Women with a disability</p> <p>Lack of access to education</p> <p>Need for good information and Training for women and girls</p> <p>Vulnerability to early/child/forced marriage</p> <p>Exploitation of women and girls</p> <p>Shelter for victims of SGBV</p> <p>Engaging men and boys to stop GBV</p> <p>Poverty and SGBV</p> <p>Access to Justice for women victims of SGBV</p>

		<p>gender-based violence”, “child marriage”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10. INTERSOS: “SGBV”</li> <li>- International Medical Corps: “GBV”, “survivors of sexual violence and other forms of GBV”, “Rape and Intimate Partner Violence”</li> <li>- 11. UNSW Forced Migration Network: “SGBV”</li> <li>-12. Belize: “survivors”, “gender-based violence”</li> <li>- 13. UNFPA: “GBV standards”</li> <li>- 14. Call to Action on GBV in emergencies: “gender-based violence”, “GBV programming”</li> <li>- 15. INTERSOS: “sexual and physical violence”</li> <li>- 16. International Medical Corps: “gender-based violence”, “sexual violence and other forms of GBV”, “Safe Space”</li> <li>-17. EU: “gender-based violence”</li> <li>- 18. HIAS: “survivors of GBV”</li> <li>- 19. Australia: “sexual and gender-based violence”</li> <li>-20. Norway: “sexual and gender-based violence”</li> <li>- 21 Vodacom Group: “gender-based violence”</li> </ul> <p><b>Jobs and Livelihoods related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-22. International Development Law Organisation: “sexual and gender-based violence”</li> <li>- 23. Jordan River Foundation: “sexual and gender-based violence”, “SGBV”</li> </ul>	
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		<p>- 24. European Union: “SGBV”</p> <p><b>Responsibility and Sharing related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <p>-25. Republic of Korea: “sexual and GBV victims and survivors”</p> <p>- 26. Faith Based Organisations: “gender-based violence”</p>	
<b>Objectives – Gender Audit</b>	<b>Global Compact on Refugees</b>	<b>Pledges GRF</b>	<b>2020 HCD</b>
<p><b>4. Address the vulnerabilities and barriers which prevent the protection and full inclusion of all refugee women and girls</b></p>	<p><b>Total Mentions - 23</b></p> <p><b>Paragraphs referenced to key barriers.</b></p> <p>Para 54 - Safe spaces</p> <p>Paras 4, 57, 59, 60, 75, 76 - SGBV</p> <p>Paras 58, 82, 83 - Legal/Registration</p> <p>Paras 68, 69, 75, 95 -Education (inc. tertiary)</p> <p>Paras 70, 71, 75, 89- Economic/Livelihoods</p> <p>Paras 72, 75 - Health</p> <p>Paras 74 - Gender inequality</p> <p>Paras 75 - Justice</p> <p>Paras 80 - Food security</p>	<p><b>Total mentions – 29</b></p> <p><b>Energy and Infrastructure related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <p>-1. Mexico: “sexual and reproductive health”, “universal and free access”</p> <p>- 2. UNFPA and UNHCR: “menstrual hygiene”</p> <p><b>Education related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <p>- 3. World Vision: “right to early childhood development and education opportunities”</p> <p>-4. JRS: “girls’ access to education”, “equal access to high quality, holistic education for girls”</p> <p>- 5. Plan International: “gender-related barriers”, “gender responsive”</p> <p>-6. Refugee Engagement Forum: “increasing refugee children (especially girls’ attendance”</p> <p>-7. Vodafone International and UNHCR: “access to quality education”</p> <p>- 8. Amal Alliance: “psych-social support”</p>	<p><b>Total Mentions in the Sessions – 85</b></p> <p><b>Total Mentions in the Zoom Q and A – 35</b></p> <p><b>Subthemes included:</b></p> <p>The economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls</p> <p>Safe Livelihoods</p> <p>Gender Equality</p> <p>The importance of Inclusion, (macro and micro)</p> <p>Intersectionality of barriers for women</p> <p>Problems facing LGBTI communities</p> <p>Older people</p> <p>Women with a disability</p> <p>Lack of access to education</p> <p>Access to Technology for women and girls</p> <p>Need for good information and Training for women and girls</p> <p>Vulnerability to early/child/forced marriage</p> <p>Exploitation of women and girls</p> <p>Shelter for victims of SGBV</p>

		<p>-9. Ireland: “girls’ education”  - 10. El Salvador: “psycho-social care programs”, “prioritised educational centres”  - 11. Rwanda: “access to TVET”  - 12. South Sudan: “Community Girls School”  -13. Malala Fund: “marginalised and vulnerable girls”</p> <p><b>Solutions related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b>  - 14. Nigeria: “women”, “access to basic social services”</p> <p><b>Protection Capacity related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b>  - 15. UNFPA: “sexual and reproductive health”  - 16. UNFPA: “women and girls in vulnerable situations”  - 17. Republic of Korea: “sexual violence”  - 18. Spain: “gender-based violence”  - 19. Save the Children: “gender-sensitive support services”  -20. International Centre for Migration Policy Development: “gender”  - Mexico: “gender”</p> <p><b>Jobs and Livelihood related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b>  -21. IKEA: “sustainable livelihoods”  - 22. KIMS Microfinance: “marginalised”, “support refugee livelihoods”</p>	<p>Poverty and SGBV  Access to Justice for women victims of SGBV  Reproductive Health Care  Increased psycho-social support for both refugees and frontline workers  Urgent COVID-19 vaccination for women and children  Health needs of youth</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Rescue Committee: “women’s right to work”, “gender pay gap”</li> <li>-23. International Rescue Committee: “gender-pay and decent-work gaps”</li> <li>- 24. Good Neighbours International/KCOC: “psychosocial support”</li> <li>-25. FAO/UNHCR: “reduced protection risks for women/girls with firewood collection”</li> <li>- 26. Croatia: “women’s economic empowerment”</li> <li>-27. European Union and Liberia: “education training”</li> <li>-28. UNHCR/Sweden: “small businesses”</li> <li>-29. UNDP: “digital transformation”</li> </ul>	
<b>Objectives – Gender Audit</b>	<b>Global Compact on Refugees</b>	<b>Pledges GRF</b>	<b>2020 HCD</b>
<b>5. Encourage reference and adherence to the UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Policy</b>	<p><b>Total Mentions - 22</b></p> <p><b>Paragraphs referenced to key terms</b></p> <p>Paras 13, 58, 47, 106 -Age Gender and Diversity Policy/Approach  Paras 34, 40, women, youth, people with a disability  Paras 51, 59, 70, 71, 72, 76, 80, 82, 89 – listed many ages and diverse groups  Para 54 – Age, Gender and Disability  Paras 57, 60, 92, 95 - Children</p>	<p><b>Total Mentions - 40</b></p> <p><b>Energy and Infrastructure related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1. Banking Foundation, Ethiopia: “mothers”</li> </ul> <p><b>Education related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2. Plan International: “young girls”, “adolescent girls”</li> <li>- 3. World Vision International: “people with disabilities”, “parents”, “caregivers”, “girls”, “boys”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Total Mentions in the Sessions – 33</b></p> <p><b>Total Mentions in the Zoom Q and A – 16</b></p> <p><b>Subthemes included:</b>  The economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls  Safe Livelihoods  Gender Equality  The importance of Inclusion, (macro and micro)  Intersectionality of barriers for women  Problems facing LGBTI communities</p>

	<p>Para 68 - Boys and Girls Para 69 -Gender &amp; Disability</p>	<p>-4. PlanBorneFoden Denmark: “Gender and Age Sensitive Analysis and Needs Assessment”</p> <p>- 5. Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies: “girls”</p> <p>-6. El Salvador: “girls”, “adolescents”, “youth”</p> <p>-7. Canada: “girls, adolescent girls and women”</p> <p><b>Solutions related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <p>- 8. Act for Peace: “AGD-responsiveness”</p> <p>- 9. Canada and UNHCR: “<b>LGBTQ</b>”, “women and girls”</p> <p>-10. PlanBornefonden Denmark: “children and youth”</p> <p>-11. Norway: “children, women and men of various nationalities, faiths, sexual orientation, etc”</p> <p>- 12. RET International: “gender, age groups, people with disabilities, and diversity, vulnerable local youth”</p> <p><b><i>Protection Capacity</i> related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <p>-13. UNFPA: “gender and age marker”, “sex-disaggregated data”, “partnership with youth”, “young men”, “boys”, “young women”</p> <p>- 14. Spain: “elderly people”, “people with disabilities”, “LGBTI people”</p> <p>- 15. Care International: “other vulnerable groups (<b>sexual minorities</b>, ethnic minorities”</p>	<p>Older people Women with a disability Lack of access to education Access to Technology for women and girls Need for good information and Training for women and girls Vulnerability to early/child/forced marriage Exploitation of women and girls Shelter for victims of SGBV Poverty and SGBV Access to Justice for women victims of SGBV Reproductive Health Care Increased psycho-social support for both refugees and frontline workers Urgent COVID-19 vaccination for women and children Health needs of youth</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 16. Women Deliver: “age, gender and diversity”</li> <li>- 17. RET International: “age, gender, disability and diversity sensitive”</li> <li>-18. Adventist Development and Relief Agency: “women and children and people with special needs”</li> <li>-19. Forced Migration Network: “Age, Gender and Diversity”</li> <li>-20. CARE International: “Age, Gender and Diversity”</li> <li>-21. Care International: “Rapid Gender Analysis”</li> <li>-22. Plan International: “adolescent mothers”, “girl centred”</li> <li>-23. INTERSOS: “<b>LGBTQI</b>”, “<b>lesbian</b>”</li> <li>- Multiple Pledging Entities: “age, gender, disability and diversity disaggregated data”</li> <li>-24. EU: “persons with disabilities”, “children”</li> <li>-25. Initiative for Child rights in the GC members of the initiative: “child and gender sensitive”</li> <li>-26. Alliance for the Protection of Children: “young and adolescent girls”, “children with disabilities”</li> <li>- 27. Women’s Refugee Commission: “women and girls with disabilities”</li> <li>- 28. Save the Children: “gender-disaggregated data”</li> <li>-29. Queer Sisterhood Project: “Queer Sisterhood”, “age, gender and diversity lens”</li> <li>-30. Spain: “gender and age perspective”, “gender and age markers”</li> </ul>	
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		<p>- Spain: “age, gender and diversity approach”</p> <p>- 31. World Vision International: “unaccompanied minors”, “diversity and gender”, “children on the move”</p> <p><b>Jobs and Livelihoods related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <p>- 32. Croatia: “women with disabilities”</p> <p>- 33. RET International: “youth, women and persons with disabilities”</p> <p>-34. FINCA/OBUL/PHB: “women and support start up challenges for young entrepreneurs”</p> <p>-35. Norway: “women, children, young adults, older persons”</p> <p>- 36. Multiple NGOs: “girls, boys, women, men and LGBTQI+ persons”, “those with disabilities”</p> <p><b>Responsibility and Sharing related Pledges by Organisation and Key words</b></p> <p>- 37. Act for Peace: “youth, elders, LGBTIQ people, people with disability, people from ethnic and religious minorities, and other groups including people in vulnerable situations”</p> <p>- 38. Islamic Relief Worldwide and Lutheran World Federation: “age, gender and diversity approaches”</p> <p>- 39. PlanBornefonden Denmark: “adolescent girls”, “child-friendly mechanisms”</p> <p>- 40. Multiple NGOs: “age, gender and diversity sensitive”</p>	
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## Annexe 4: Summary Report – Opening Session, High Commissioners Dialogue, October 21, 2020. Virtual Meeting

Authors: Eileen Pittaway, Linda Bartolomei, Apajok Biar, Andrea Ayala

<b><u>Meeting name:</u></b>	Opening Session of the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges.
<b><u>Dialogue between:</u></b>	<b>Filippo Grandi</b> , High commissioner, UNHCR
<b><u>Facilitator:</u></b>	<b>Kelly Clements</b> , Deputy High Commissioner UNHCR,
<b><u>Refugee panellists:</u></b>	<b>Nhial Deng</b> - South Sudanese refugee in Kakuma refugee camp <b>Dr Fezzeh Hosseini</b> – Dr. from Iran <b>Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim</b> – Indigenous and environmental activist from Chad <b>Barthelemy Mwanza Ngane</b> - GYAC co-chair, Congolese refugee living in Zimbabwe <b>Dr Carmen Alejandra Parra</b> – Venezuelan doctor in Peru <b>Shadi Shhaded</b> – Syrian refugee advocate in Switzerland

### Reflections and Analysis

The opening session provided a comprehensive framework of Inclusion and Solidarity in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic for the High Commissioner’s Dialogue (HCD), 2020. In his opening address, Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, spoke strongly about what he hoped the meeting would achieve for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and ensured that a gender lens and analysis was applied throughout the Dialogue. The Deputy High Commissioner, Kelly Clements, was a highly effective moderator and made sure that key issues were clearly addressed, and questions answered. The commitment to refugee participation in tackling protection issues was demonstrated by the inclusion of six refugee speakers on the opening panel. The three female and three male refugees were all strong and resourceful and made excellent presentations. By their presence they modelled the resilience, expertise and capacity of people who have been refugees to contribute, not only to their own communities, but also to host communities, and to the international dialogue on Protection.

While the three male refugees discussed very positive gendered aspects of their work, the female panellists did not explicitly mention gender issues except in relation to reproductive health. However, their presence as inspirational women made a strong point, their contributions clearly demonstrating the value of including women and girls as key contributors to the decision-making process.

There was some discussion of Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD), SGBV, early and forced marriage, reproductive health, and minimal mention of other diverse groups (five of women and girls, two of youth and one of the LGBTI community from the Gender Audit Team (GAT). Apart from a statement about children, there was no mention of AGD related issues in the Statements submitted. It is acknowledged that some key stakeholders, UN bodies, governments and policy makers, who already have a strong age, gender and diversity analysis reflected in their work, may not need constantly reminding of AGD. However, there are still many groups who do not apply this analysis. If all stakeholders could be encouraged to make *explicit* mention of the AGD framework, women, girls and other diverse groups in the Dialogue, it could act as an *aide-memoir* to remind others of the importance of this framework to the goals of inclusion and solidarity. There was discussion about the major barriers to inclusion and solidarity faced by refugees and ways to overcome them: e.g; the need for recognition of qualifications in host countries. However, there was very little mention of barriers such as work rights, access to bank accounts, the ability to register refugee-led organisations and receive funds. Importantly, while there was recognition of the real risks of SGBV,

including forced and early marriage, early pregnancy and lack of access to education, there was little recognition about the different and additional barriers to participation faced by women and girls such as inadequate access to sexual and reproductive health care, lack of childcare or that women leaders often face particular risks of *targeted SGBV* and community backlash for the roles they are taking.

There was very positive discussion about the importance of work, not only for income, but as a tool of empowerment and a way of assisting one's own community and benefiting host communities. There was a strong call for recognition of the work done by refugees. The underlying assumption that refugees should undertake work for their communities as volunteers evident in some of the discussion should be challenged, as it is widely recognized that empowerment will only come when refugees can earn a living. It was therefore good to see that the two women doctors on the panel were in Government employment in their countries of asylum. Sadly, there was little acknowledgement or in-depth discussion of the known increase in SGBV experienced by women and girls because of the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.

#### **We therefore recommend that:**

- There be a focus on the different barriers to participation, inclusion and solidarity experienced by female and male refugees, IDPs and diverse groups in **all** areas to be addressed in the HCD 2020 and that solutions be identified to address the additional barriers faced by refugee and IDP women and girls.
- That the increase of SGBV experienced by women and girls as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises, such as the challenges of climate change, be acknowledged, articulated and addressed in all current programs and potential future solutions
- That Age, Gender and Diversity aspects of all issues be explicitly named and addressed, and not left to an assumption of inclusion, for example by using the term "vulnerable groups".

#### **Feedback on the Formal Session – references to Age, Gender and Diversity**

##### **The High Commissioner**

In his inspirational, opening remarks, the High Commissioner Filippo Grandi talked about the economic impact of COVID-19 and the terrible public poverty it is causing. He particularly mentioned that this is impacting on refugees more than on other sectors of the community, and that refugee women and girls are the most vulnerable to this outcome of the pandemic. They are the most likely to be denied education and are vulnerable to early marriage and exploitation. He stated that to ensure this does not happen, women and girls must be included at every level of decision making and every action taken. The High Commissioner talked of the high risk of exclusion, and the importance of not being "locked out". If we work in isolation, it is a violation of people's rights. He noted that inclusion is the opposite of exclusion and exclusion is negative and marginalising. Exclusion can turn into xenophobia and marginalisation for refugees. He challenged us to look at what inclusiveness means for refugee men and women, and how we can achieve this: for example, of the importance of refugees who are skilled working in countries which have professional shortages.

**Nhial Deng**, based in Kakuma, talked about the importance of girls receiving education and digital skills. He also talked about providing minor girls and other minorities with this knowledge, and the consequences, such as SGBV and early marriage, if girls did not have access to education. He discussed this in the context of the power of refugees helping their own communities, both for the refugee and host communities, and the individual refugees.

**Barthelemy Mwanza Ngane**, identified that SGBV is a problem, but that SGBV support can be virtual support, and can go to both men and to women. He is working with UNHCR to get virtual education, both formal and informal, to refugees. An example he gave was that they had held a big event for the International Day of Girls online. However, much more technology is needed in camps for this be available to all refugees.

**Shadi Shhaded**, shared how his organisation is empowering women by not just training them, but also employing them once trained. He described how in one site, 600 previously trained women have taken over the role of sharing COVID-19 information, tracing awareness and supporting community workers. He stated that they have been the first responders, they are trusted and effective, and a great asset. However, in the context of COVID-19, Shadi Shhaded commented that "*If you can't work at home you are not locked down, you*

*are locked out*” He commented that working with these refugees makes him have pride in being a refugee, and not shame, which used to be the case.

### **Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Dr Fezzeh Hosseini and Dr Carmen Alejandra Parra Carmen**

While not directly addressing gender issues, the three women panellists clearly showed the resilience and strength of women refugees and the value and major contributions they can make, to their own and host communities. They also clearly articulated the barriers to this.

All six of the refugees demonstrated a sophisticated analysis of the problems facing refugee communities, and solutions, and discussed the power of community to address problems.

The High Commissioner and the refugee panel all agreed that we must learn lessons from what is happening now in the pandemic and take that learning into the future. Of mention was the connection made by Hindou between the problems posed by COVID-19, and the other challenges we are all facing.

*“Very clearly we cannot wear a mask against climate change”* Hindou Oumarou

### **Feedback on the Zoom Q and A and UNHCR App questions.**

Some-what disappointingly, of the total of 30 comments, questions and statements posted across Zoom Q&A platform and the UNHCR APP platform, only 8 had a gendered lens and five of these came from the GAT. Three of these were answered during the session – see below.

### **Summary of the three Gender related questions which received a response from the moderator during the meeting:**

**Q.** One question asked by the GAT was about using the Aspire Guidelines, launched by the Independent Expert on Protection against Violence and Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in June 2020 to support LGBTI, Refugees, Stateless and Internally Displaced Peoples.

**A.** The answer from the Moderator noted that they are a useful tool which must be used to ensure accountability to ensure inclusivity beyond the pandemic.

**Q.** A second question from the GAT addressed the lack of girls’ education leading to an increase of early marriage and pregnancy which has increased in the face of COVID-19?

**A.** The answer, from Charlotte Arnaud, stressed the importance of creating ways in which young girls can continue their studies, preferably at national schools. With amplified support for refugee and host communities, and a focus on gender equality support for community- led, including refugee voices, knowledge and experience.

**Q.** The question asked from the Government of the USA representative asked how can we address the challenges refugees will continue to face - through education, integrational systems, ensuring that women and girls needs are prioritized and that their contributions to their communities are acknowledged.

**A.** The answer from the moderator was that refugees themselves are the experts on the refugee experience and have solutions to offer. Women and girls’ voices are essential for design, delivery, and accountability. UNHCR has many excellent examples of this and UNHCR’s community-based protection colleagues can connect interested parties.

## Annexe 5: Summary Report – Protection Considerations, High Commissioners Dialogue, November 5, 2020. Virtual Meeting

Authors: Eileen Pittaway, Linda Bartolomei, Tina Dixson, Shaza Al Rihawi

<b><u>Meeting name:</u></b>	Protection challenges and responses to COVID-19 for, and by, forcibly displaced and stateless people
<b><u>Session Name and Focus:</u></b>	The global pandemic has challenged the institution of asylum. In some cases, it has triggered restrictive measures, but in others innovative approaches have been taken to enable the continued functioning of asylum systems and the protection of forcibly displaced and stateless populations. <a href="https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/protection-challenges-and-responses-to-covid-19-for-and-by-displaced-and.html">https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/protection-challenges-and-responses-to-covid-19-for-and-by-displaced-and.html</a>
<b><u>UNHCR:</u></b> <b><u>Facilitator:</u></b>	<b>Ms Gillian Triggs</b> , Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection <b>Mr. Barthelemy Mwanza Ngane</b> , Congolese refugee currently living in Zimbabwe, Co-Chair of the UNHCR Global Youth Advisory Council (GYAC)
<b><u>Panellists:</u></b>	<b>Ms. Leila Muriithia Simiyu</b> , an advocate of the High Court of Kenya, practicing at the Refugee Consortium of Kenya;  <b>Ms. Ala Ali Al Qassem</b> , journalist at a radio station, writing about refugees, including on innovation, women’s roles and education;  <b>Ms. Maya Devi</b> , President of the Bhutanese Refugee Association of the Disabled (BRAD);  <b>Ms. Tamara Maksimovna Inzhutova</b> , “Good Deeds Foundation”, and volunteer with children at the community centre;  <b>Ms. Maria Fernanda Cevallos Jaramillo</b> , National Director of International Protection Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, Ecuador, Coordinator, Refugee and Statelessness Commission, Coordinator Institutional Strengthening Project, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNHCR.

### REFLECTIONS AND ANALYSIS

This was an excellent session, with a major focus on Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD), and the experience of women and girls. The all-female panel represented youth and elderly refugees and focused on women with a disability. However, their presentations were inclusive and covered refugees, IDPs and Stateless persons. They presented a clear analysis and articulation of major issues faced by their communities because of COVID-19 and presented a number of innovative good practices, and achievable suggestions for policy and programming (see below). In a strong statement which reiterated the legal rights of refugees, Ms Gillian Triggs, Assistant Secretary-General, and Assistant High Commissioner for Protection stated that a gender lens must be applied to the collective work of all stakeholders. Much credit must be given to **Mr. Barthelemy Mwanza Ngane** for his excellent chairing of the session. He used a well-developed understanding of AGD to respond to presenters and ask questions which elaborated on the gendered aspects of issues. He demonstrated the power of a good chair

to shape a session, and that “Gender” is: (a) not just a “women’s issue” but an issue for us all, both women and men; and (b) that men can be superb gender champions. Thank you, Bart.

The debate highlighted the intersectional nature of the COVID-19-related problems experienced between the groups incorporated under the umbrella of age, gender and diversity. These included the economic impacts on education, loss of livelihoods, inability to access health care and medicines, loss of opportunities to access income, shortages of food and other basics. There was an increase in SGBV across the majority of issues discussed. These problems are amplified by, and further contribute to, xenophobia, racism and discrimination, based at times on a fear that refugee communities are carriers of COVID-19.

An important contribution to the debate was a focus on gender inequality and naming it as a major cause of SGBV. However, gender inequality has to be examined in the context of the intersectional nature of discrimination against refugees, both women and men. It does not mean that if refugee women and girls have equal access to education, health care, shelter, livelihoods, and decision-making processes, SGBV will disappear. That would imply that men and boys are not subject to SGBV, and we know this is not true. While women and girls are at significantly higher risk of SGBV, the risks are not the same for all women and girls or for all men and boys. To fully address the problem of SGBV we need to identify the intersecting factors which increase vulnerability for particular groups including members of the LGBTI community and among others, unaccompanied minors and those with a disability. SGBV is mainly a structural problem. It is encouraging to see this happening in some of the examples of good practice presented in the two HCD meetings to date. We need to ensure that the concept of “Gender Equality” is not used as short-hand for gender mainstreaming or gender inclusive programming. Equally we must work to ensure that diversity considerations are fully integrated across all programs and responses.

Congratulations must be extended to the Government of Ecuador for the inclusion of sex and gender identity in all documents relating to refugees and asylum seekers and their extremely positive approach to real inclusion. This is a major step forward, the first mention of LGBTI community from a Member State in the HCD and an excellent example of best practice.

UNHCR must also be congratulated for their prompt and thorough responses to the majority of questions posted on the Zoom Q and A. It has been widely discussed that a major advantage of the on-line forum is that of allowing much wider access to participants who would normally not be able to attend the HCD. However, what is missing from the proceedings is the rich discussion which is often heard at the HCD. While it has been very important to hear answers to questions from UNHCR, it would be equally important to hear responses from more member states and other key stakeholders.

### ***Recommendations:***

That we move forward from asking about **what** the challenges are to asking about **how** to solve them. Bringing more examples of good practices and specific ideas might help now in shifting the approach for more positive impact. These must include those groups of forcibly displaced people, such as people with disabilities, the aged and LGBTI, communities who are less commonly mentioned in policy and planning.

That we move to the more inclusive language adopted by UNHCR in the context of AGD, of referring to ALL women and girls, men and boys, to emphasise that forcibly displaced people are diverse, and INCLUDES all ages, those who are LGBTI, people with disabilities, people from ethnic and religious minorities, and of Indigenous status etc. and to ensure that we are not “othering” particular groups by naming **them** or their needs as outside of the mainstream refugee community.

Once again, as in our report on the Opening session we request that presenters and people submitting questions always include AGD, women and girls specifically, in their text, as an aide-memoir to those who have not yet incorporated this into their thinking.

That UNHCR could encourage and facilitate a system to allow member states and other participants to answer questions on the Zoom Q and A, to ensure the rich level of debate which has occurred in the past in the HCD. This will be particularly important on the final hybrid day.

### **KEY POINTS FROM THE PANEL PRESENTATIONS.**

*Common issues which were raised by panellists, but not discussed as being Gender specific or AGD inclusive, but which equally apply to ALL refugees.*

These included:

- The severe impacts of loss of livelihoods.
- Severe shortages of basics such as food and medicines.
- Praise for refugee-led organizations who have taken a major role as first responders, and acknowledgement of the barriers to funding refugee-led work.
- Praise for refugees, IDPs and Stateless persons who are providing service to their own, and to, host communities.
- The need to acknowledge that given the opportunity, refugees are assets, not burdens.
- The power of technology to break down some of the old barriers, and the good programs and services now online.
- The problems experienced by many refugees in accessing/affording technology.
- An increase in xenophobia and discrimination.

These all have an AGD dimension which needs unpacking and to inform the development of systems which respond to the diverse needs of all forcibly displaced peoples.

Key references to Age Gender and Diversity issues made by panellists.

### **Ms Gillian Triggs**

In her opening remarks, the Assistant High Commissioner stressed the importance of consistently using an Age, Gender and Diversity Lens in every aspect of our work. She spoke of the shocking fact that since the beginning of the pandemic across the world, UNHCR GBV Hotlines had been overwhelmed with calls for assistance. The economic impacts of COVID-19 on women and children are reflected in the rise in domestic and family violence, forced and early marriage. She noted the importance of refugees being included in national systems as a key tool in responding to these needs. After listening to the panellists she commended the focus on disability services and psycho-social support, including for front-line workers, stressed the need for more safe houses for victims of SGBV, for identifying agencies which can assist, and for a focus on the needs of older women. She made the commitment that recommendations from the HCD will be taken forward into the work of UNHCR in 2021.

### **Mr. Barthelemy Mwanza Ngane**

While not a presenter, Barthelemy must be congratulated for his total focus on AGD, and his sensitive questions, which ensured that the different needs of all women and children were never forgotten. He was not afraid to name SGBV and its outcomes in plain language.

### **Ms. Leila Muriithia Simiyu**

While the AGD framework underpinned the entire presentation made by Leila, of note were the following comments and suggestions. She gave several examples of creative solutions to problems. For example, RCK negotiated with the police to respond to women who had to break the COVID-19 curfew because they were experiencing DV, provided "Comfort Packs" for women who presented at the Police Station for protection, and laptops so that women could give testimony remotely. This speaks of a good relationship built between RCK and the Police. She discussed the need to support girls who had been raped, sometimes pregnant, or forced into marriage, to provide them mental health services, to allow them to return to school, to be included in safety nets and not to be shamed.

### **Ms. Ala Ali Al Qassem**

Ala, journalist, is a very strong young woman who demonstrated the power of education for women and girls and the major contribution they can make to addressing community problems. She has written about COVID-19 safe houses designed by women engineers in Jordan, and the key role women with education play in the refugee communities, mentoring and supporting mothers thrust into home-schooling by the pandemic. As a journalist she was able to disseminate not only COVID-19 information, but also strong messages of hope about what women and girls were achieving, encouraging them to pursue their goals. She noted that education is the gateway to the future and that all girls and women need support to achieve this. This includes programs on gender equality, and scholarships, not just for young women, but also targeting older women. In summary, she requested that we seek more innovative ideas to address problems, and that refugees always be included in the discussion.

### **Ms. Maya Devi**

Spoke passionately about the incredibly high levels of SGBV experienced by women and girls with a disability and the need for all stakeholders to focus on ways to prevent and address this. Key problems she mentioned were the difficulties that people with disabilities have in accessing information: for example, without a signer, people with a hearing disability do not receive information. She noted that women and girls with a disability are usually at the bottom of the social hierarchy in any society and are denied access to many essential services. They are often confined to their homes and, if their husbands or family members are abusive, sometimes because the women are receiving assistance and they are not, they are not able to seek protection. They often have high mental health needs which require on-going counselling. She listed the need for safe houses, counselling services, livelihoods, technical training and a focus on hygiene needs specifically tailored to women and girls with a disability and gave some excellent examples of services offered by her organization. These included "Family Unity" programs, the importance of the diaspora sending money for food and medical needs, which are distributed to the women and girls. Importantly, they run empowerment programs to encourage these women and girls to raise their voices and be heard. A most important issue that she raised was that on-line support services HAVE to be in languages other than English.

### **Ms. Tamara Maksimovna Inzhutova**

While not directly referring to gender issues Tamara made a strong presentation, about both the strength and resilience of older refugees and their capacity to contribute significantly to their own and the host communities. With reference to the many mental health aspects of COVID-19, she stated that being involved, having something to contribute, gave meaning to life. She made the important point that many older refugees do not have access to technology and in fact are afraid of it. They need information on paper and, if possible, via the TV or radio.

### **Ms. Maria Fernanda Cevallos Jaramillo**

Speaking as the representative of the Government of Ecuador, Maria gave a powerful presentation discussing the importance of planning for the future and the creative use of technology. While not making specific reference to AGD, women and girls, she was the only presenter to address the LGBTI community and to describe how the inclusion of LGBTI peoples in all of the government systems ensured that they were seen as a valid and accepted part of the population.

## **QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS**

As could be expected of a panel which had a major focus on Age, Gender and Diversity, there were multiple specific mentions of various AGD categories, while much of the discussion focused on the need to acknowledge diversity. Women and girls were mentioned 8 times; Age, Gender and Diversity 9 times; Youth were mentioned 4 times and LGBTI communities only once. One whole presentation was on women and girls with a disability and another on the elderly, while SGBV was addressed 11 times across all categories.



## **FEEDBACK ON THE ZOOM Q AND A AND UNHCR APP QUESTIONS.**

Of the total of 49 comments, questions and statements posted, **15** had a gendered lens. **5** of those came from a Gender Audit team (GAT) member. Of those, 4 referred directly to AGD, 7 mentioned GBV, 4 Gender and gender equality, 7 mentioned women and girls, only 2 mentioned LGBTI, 2 mentioned elderly refugees, and 5 mentioned unaccompanied minors.

Other issues of concern raised in which AGD was not specifically mentioned apply equally to ALL women and girls, as well as men and boys. The questions were addressing many cross-cutting issues from xenophobia, statelessness, registration, resettlement and complementary pathways, IT knowledge, mental health during COVID, adhering to ASPIRE guidelines, implications for LGBTI/Refugees/IDP/Stateless communities, internal structural commitments to gender and financing community-led initiatives. As noted in our report of the Opening session of the HCD 2020, while it is acknowledged that some key stakeholders, UN bodies, governments and policy makers who already have a strong age, gender and diversity analysis reflected in their work may not need constantly reminding of AGD, there are still many groups who do not apply this analysis. If all stakeholders could be encouraged to make *explicit* mention of the AGD framework, women, girls and other diverse groups in the Dialogue, it could act as an *aide-memoir* to remind others of the importance of this framework to the goals of inclusion and solidarity.

### ***Summary of answers.***

As noted above, the questions were answered by UNHCR staff. Answers directly addressing AGD included an acknowledgement of the ASPIRE guidelines in addressing issues experienced by the LGBTI community, but emphasising that the AGD Framework, which covers ALL women and ALL men is the main guiding framework. It was stated that LGBTI people are among those most affected by COVID-19 and that UNHCR works with local-civil society organisations to reach out to these groups. The increase in mental health problems was acknowledged as a major concern in a time when women themselves are experiencing increased negative impacts. They noted that empowering refugee women is essential and that there are many examples of good practice in this area. The role of gender equality in addressing SGBV was seen as critical and it was noted that men and boys must be included in this goal. UNHCR are advocating for Gender Equality in National Laws. They acknowledged the invaluable contribution of women-led groups and have been supporting them to facilitate access to essential services and information. It was stated that multiyear planning is the key to transforming social norms. The UNHCR GBV Principles are critical to guide the response to SGBV, and this is strengthened by community engagement. They note that the pandemic is increasing inequality everywhere and particular attention must be taken of the needs of the elderly and disabled people. UNHCR is working with local actors and community members to ensure that communication channels are accessible to all refugees. It was positive that the UNHCR responses emphasised integrating refugees into the national education systems in host communities, supporting women-led initiatives, and the inclusion of refugees and IDPs, statelessness in national mechanisms.

Thank you.

## Annexe 6: Summary Report – Resilience and Inclusion in Health, High Commissioners Dialogue, November 18, 2020. Virtual Meeting

Authors: Eileen Pittaway, Linda Bartolomei, Hafsar Tameesuddin, Najeeba Wazefadost

<b>Meeting name:</b> Virtual Session, 18 <sup>th</sup> of Nov)	Resilience and inclusion in health (emergency and longer-term approaches with reference to COVID-19)
<b>Session Name and Focus:</b>	The session will open with a panel chaired by the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations and will include two refugee-hosting countries, a refugee representative, and the World Bank <a href="https://www.unhcr.org/en-au//resilience-and-inclusion-in-health-emergency-and-longer-term-approaches.html">https://www.unhcr.org/en-au//resilience-and-inclusion-in-health-emergency-and-longer-term-approaches.html</a>
<b>Facilitator(s):</b>	<b>Mr. Raouf Mazou (Chairperson)</b> (Assistant High Commissioner for Operations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) <b>Mr. Nigel Pearson</b> (Moderator) specializes in strengthening health systems in countries experiencing fragility and conflict
<b>Panellists:</b>	<b>Mr. Alberto Rodriguez</b> , Director for Strategy and Operations in Human Development, responsible for the strategy and operational aspects of the World Bank’s global portfolio. <b>Dr. Fezzeh Hosseini</b> , an Afghan refugee doctor in Esfahan province, in Iran. She oversees a dozen doctors and nurses since the COVID-19 outbreak. <b>Dr. Sami Sheikh Ali</b> , Director of Communicable Diseases, Ministry of Health, Jordan. <b>Dr. Sophie Witter</b> , Prof. of International Health Financing and Health Systems Institute for Global Health and Development, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh <b>Dr. Alfred Driwale</b> , Assistant Commissioner Health Services: Vaccines and Immunization and heads the National Immunisation Program in the Ministry of Health, Uganda. <b>Dr. Md Akramul Islam</b> , Director of Communicable Diseases and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Programme, BRAC <b>Dr. Santino Severoni</b> , Director of the Migration Health Programme, Office of the Deputy Director-General, at the WHO headquarters in Geneva. <b>Ms. Valérie Schmitt</b> , Deputy Director in the Social Protection Department of the International Labour Organization (ILO), based in Geneva leader of ILO's Flagship programme on building social protection floors for all. <b>Mr. Thomas Gonnet</b> , an emergency and development practitioner in failed/fragile states and emerging countries. <b>Ms. Olga Bornemisza</b> , works at the Global Fund as a senior advisor on health systems

### REFLECTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Despite a number of excellent presentations on key topics, and a reasonable gender representation on the panel, with 7 men and 4 women, from a gender perspective this was a disappointing session. It failed to meet the High Commissioner’s commitment in the Opening Session (21/11) to ‘*ensure that a gender lens and analysis was applied throughout the Dialogue.*’ Although “inclusion” was the focus, the different needs of women and men, or of those covered in the Age, Gender and Diversity Policy, such as people with a disability, the elderly, women and girls and LGBTI communities were barely mentioned. As Andrew Harper, UNHCR Special Advisor on Climate Action, stated in the Climate Change session of the 2020 UNHCR NGO consultations, the time has come to move beyond gender inclusion to gender-

transformation in our work. This applies to **All** areas of our work, including health service provision. It involves addressing the root causes of gender inequality and recognizing the way in which gender inequality intersects with, and is compounded by, discrimination. This includes, among others, on grounds of race, class and gender identity. A gender transformative approach includes strategies to foster progressive changes in power relationships between women and men which directly impact on individual and community resilience and equity of access to health services and outcomes.

## **KEY POINTS FROM THE PANEL PRESENTATIONS.**

***Common issues which were raised by panellists, but not discussed as being Gender specific or AGD inclusive, but which equally apply to ALL refugees.***

The majority of the panellists focused on the critically important need for refugee inclusion in host country national health care and social insurance systems. Most urged the international community and donors to ease the burden on host countries and to share the responsibilities of granting refugees access to national health care. Some excellent examples of good practices were described. Sadly, few of these important issues was analysed through a gender lens. It was noted that host countries often are struggling with health provision for their own communities, in particular those classified as Fragile Economies. The World Bank is targeting some of these member states with grants to provide health services and assist economic growth and recovery. One goal of these grants is that they will enable the inclusion of refugees in health service provision. There was also a suggestion that refugees need to be encouraged to take more responsibility for their own health. Until the intersectional nature of the range of discriminations faced by refugees, such as discrimination in the labour market, gender discrimination, and problems faced by the LGBTI community, the elderly and refugees with a disability, this will be impossible to achieve. The fact that no gender lens was applied to the discussion was a missed opportunity to set out a gender transformative, forward-looking vision for the resilience and health of forcibly displaced populations.

### ***Key references to Age Gender and Diversity issues made by panellists***

Examples of good inclusive practice which addressed AGD came from:

Dr. Fezzeh Hosseini, refugee doctor, Iran, who noted that in the context of COVID they had particularly targeted women with underlying diseases like cancer to ensure access to flu vaccines.

Dr. Alfred Driwale, Assistant Commissioner Health Services, Uganda, mentioned that the policy of 'health services for all' which includes refugees, provides access to Sexual and Reproductive health care, HIV testing and family planning.

Dr. Sophie Witter, Professor of International Health, Deputy Director of the NIHR looked at the gender barriers to contributory health insurance systems because of the nature of women's insecure informal employment. She stated that inclusion won't happen unless UNHCR or Donors fund the costs of Social Protection. As long as there is no social protection for workers in the informal system it will be difficult to integrate refugees into national health systems. She also said – *we need to bring in communities more – more empowerment – training to look after their own health and that this is the same principle that should apply to both refugee and host communities.*

Dr Sami Shekh Ali described how Jordan provides free health services to refugees, including gynaecological and maternity services and reproductive health care.

Dr Md Akramui Islam, BRAC, is working with the Government of Bangladesh providing HIV testing in camps in Cox's Bazar.

## **Why the need for a Gender Transformative Approach in Health?**

*A focus on gender is often still equated to working with women. This not only wastes precious resources, but also exacerbates inequalities in health outcomes among women, men, transgender*

*and non-binary people. Unless organisations take a fully gender-responsive approach that seeks to transform harmful gender norms, global health will fail to tackle the root cause that is driving poor health outcomes for women, men, non-binary and transgender people.*

<https://globalhealth5050.org/gender-and-health/>

As the Global Health 50/50 report clearly outlines, in many countries the life expectancy gap for men compared to women, is 11.7 years. Men are more likely to die due to higher rates of smoking and drinking, from violence, in road deaths and by suicide. However, while women might live longer, their health and health outcomes are directly impacted by patriarchal structural inequalities. Widows left without male “protection” often struggle to survive and raise their children. Complications related to pregnancy and unsafe abortions remain a major killer of girls and women world-wide. Child and forced marriage and lack of autonomy in accessing contraception have major impacts on girls and women’s health. Many young girls die in childbirth as their bodies are not yet sufficiently developed to bear a child. Across the globe, domestic and family violence continues to rage in epidemic proportions, made worse by COVID-19, leading to death and severe physical and mental health impacts for women and children.

The application of an AGD lens would recognize the additional intersectional factors which advantage or increase disadvantage when it comes to health. In the context of forcibly displaced peoples who already face multiple barriers to accessing adequate health services and in achieving equitable health outcomes, additional intersecting factors of discrimination on grounds of gender, gender identity, disability and ethnic minority status, among others must be explicitly addressed in all responses. Health services that are responsive to the diversities within forcibly displaced populations will also benefit diverse members of host populations. Inclusive and equitable health outcomes must have a gender and diversity analysis at the centre. This must recognize the ways in which gender inequality and patriarchal norms and structures influence health systems, policies and practices.

*Failure to recognize and address the role that gender plays in the health of everyone is likely to mean that no one’s health needs are fully met. It means that women and girls will continue to be targeted by policies and programs that respond to their sex-specific needs (e.g. associated with reproduction), but that fail to address underlying inequalities that drive poor health outcomes across other areas (e.g. their increased exposure to health-harming products). It means that the global health system will remain generally silent on the role that gender plays in determining poor health outcomes among men and boys, despite the impact of widespread inequalities in the distribution of economic and political power on their well-being. It is time for the global health system to recognize and address health risks rooted in long-standing social, economic and gender inequalities that impact on the health and well-being of everyone ([Global Health 50/50, 2020:85](#)).*

### **The need for accuracy in reporting.**

The following observation comes from all members of the Gender Audit Team and the researchers who have spent many years in the field working in refugee sites in nearly 30 countries. At times, and with the best of intentions, when describing good practice, presenters inadvertently give the false impression that these services are available to all refugees in a particular site, when, in fact they are not. Refugees, who have lived experience are fully aware that this is not the case and that, in fact, some services are not as effective as described. For example, two excellent but understaffed health clinics in a camp or refugee slum where 100, 000 people are living is only going to assist a tiny percentage of the population. One security post every four kilometres is not going to protect women and girls visiting bathrooms. While we need to know about these examples of good practice and use them as models for future service provision, we also must acknowledge and address the challenges to providing these services, and most importantly identify and address the gaps. If we do not do this, we give an incorrect picture to donors and humanitarian service organizations. Refugees feel disappointed and hurt when they hear what to them is a false representation of the services provided to their communities.

### **Recommendations:**

- Given the commitments to women, girls and an age, gender and diversity approach encapsulated in the [New York Declaration, 2017](#) , the [UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees, 2018](#) , as well as the many gender and AGD related pledges made as part of the Global Refugee Forum, that UNHCR specifically request the chairs of all sessions and panels (in particular their own representatives) who are part of the High Commissioner’s Dialogue 2020, directly address the gender and AGD components of the issues under discussion and that, if they are not aware of these, assistance be provided from the UNHCR Gender Unit.
- That all key stakeholders in the field of health service provision apply an AGD lens to their work, as well as considering the other important intersections of health with education, livelihoods, shelter, effective protection, and refugee participation.
- That support in the effective application of the AGD policy and framework be provided by UNHCR, and, on the Digital Platform, for the GCR, and that this portal be actively promoted and supported with training and discussion forums to assist the replication of the many excellent programs which are in place in countries around the world.
- That in order to ensure that funding is maintained and that donors and all key stakeholders are aware of the true situation in refugee sites, care be taken to ensure that the quality and availability of services in camps and refugee sites around the world are reported accurately in presentations and that major gaps and shortages of effective services are not overlooked.
- Key stakeholders are encouraged to adopt the Gender Transformative approach in all health service provision and across all responses to refugee protection both during and post the COVID-19 pandemic.
- That the UNHCR staff, who do such an excellent job in responding to questions on Zoom Q and A, prompt participants to include an AGD perspective through the application of a gender lens to all of their answers.

### **FEEDBACK ON THE ZOOM Q AND A AND UNHCR APP QUESTIONS.**

The lack of inclusion of an age, gender and diversity perspective in the Q and A and UNHCR App, including the responses to the questions, was also disappointing and perhaps reflects the importance of leadership from chairs, facilitators and panellists, as well as of participants in this area. Of the total of 44 comments, questions and statements posted across the zoom Q&A platform, only 12 had a gendered lens and 8 of those came from a Gender Audit team (GAT) member. Most of the questions were directly answered by UNHCR. Of the 12 gendered questions, two included GBV, two referred to gender equality, six clearly mentioned women and girls, three questions referred to the rights of the LGBTI community, and one mentioned children.

**Of the responses to the questions with an AGD focus** Four answers addressed AGD aspects of the questions, five questions were answered generically, but with no reference to the specific gender or AGD aspects of the questions, and three were not answered. There was no mention of LGBTI in any of the responses, once again rendering this part of the refugee community invisible, their rights not addressed.

### **Annexe 7: Summary Report, Climate Change High Commissioners Dialogue, December 2nd, 2020. Virtual Meeting**

Authors: Eileen Pittaway, Linda Bartolomei, Apajok Biar, Shaza Al Rihawi

<b><u>Meeting name:</u></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> thematic meeting for High Commissioners Dialogue 2020</b>
<b><u>Session Name and Focus:</u></b>	<b>Virtual session on COVID-19 and climate change of the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges.</b>
<b><u>Facilitator(s):</u></b>	<b>Elizabeth Puranam-</b> Journalist at Al Jazeera
<b><u>panellists:</u></b>	<p><b>Chairperson: Gillian Triggs</b>, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection UNHCR</p> <p><b>Andrew Harper</b>, Special Advisor on climate action to UNHCR</p> <p><b>Nazhat Shameem Khan</b>, HE Ambassador to Fiji</p> <p><b>Hindou Ibrahim</b>, member of Chad's pastoralist Mbororo community environmental activist and refugee advocate</p> <p><b>Bidal Abraham</b>, South Sudanese refugee in Uganda, Environmental activist, and refugee advocate</p> <p><b>Professor Saleemul Huq</b>, Director International Centre for climate change and development University Bangladesh</p> <p><b>Aditi Maheshwari</b>, Climate action for UN Secretary General Executive Office</p>

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SESSION

Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection UNHCR, and Andrew Harper, Special Advisor on Climate Action to UNHCR, set the scene for a very provocative and challenging session on the impact of climate change on refugees and IDPs. They made the very important point that there are lessons to be learned from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic which should inform the future response to climate change. Gillian Triggs noted that, like COVID-19, climate change transcends borders. The cost of doing nothing will provoke a major crisis. Andrew introduced the importance of the inclusion of women and girls in all responses and stressed the imperative of progressing the debate away from “Gender sensitive, to Gender transformative”. He placed this in the context of moving from a focus on mitigation measures to strategies for adaptation and resilience. All participants emphasized inclusion as a key goal, and “inclusion” was used to guarantee a place for women at the table, as well as the inclusion of refugees into national strategies and mechanisms. The responses addressing gender issues (see below) from Ambassador Khan, Fiji and Hindou Abraham from Chad were outstanding. The slogan “No-one Left Behind” encapsulates the spirit of the session. There was an excellent spread of gender and diversity on the panel, from a range of different backgrounds with strong experience in the field.

## KEY POINTS FROM THE PANEL PRESENTATIONS.

**Common issues which were raised by panellists, but not discussed as being Gender specific or AGD inclusive, but which equally apply to ALL refugees.**

Gillian Triggs reiterated, that at its core, protection means food on the table and all aspects of physical protection, but that equally it includes ensuring future protection through development and investment. Elizabeth Puranam noted that all change must be transformative and foster resilience. From his successful experience in “greening” refugee settlements in Uganda, Bidal Abraham spoke of the need for information and training for refugees to get them involved. He also stated that refugees should leave the environment in host countries greener than when they came. Hindou Ibrahim argued for the strong inclusions of

Indigenous knowledges and voices in ALL disaster planning, now and into the future. Aditi Maheshwari spoke of enhancing and funding adaptation and resilience for the most vulnerable. Professor Saleemul Huq reminded us that in fragile states, refugees are the MOST vulnerable, and reminded us that climate change is only going to get worse.

### **Gender specific issues raised in presentations and response**

Only four people referred to women, girls and the Age, Gender and Diversity Framework, but theirs were some of the most relevant and direct comments made in this HCD to date.

#### **Gillian Triggs**

Key comments made by Gillian Triggs included that COVID-19 and climate change transcend borders. The cost of doing nothing is a major crisis. She noted that one of the important lessons we have learned from COVID-19 is the critical role that local communities, including women, play in the response, and that we need to hear the voices of refugees and displaced persons. She stated that we must have gender equality and support women-led refugee groups and CBOs. COVID-19 has taught us that UNHCR cannot go it alone. She explained that UNHCR is working to decentralize their work to get more resources and funding out to NGOs, more funding to local host-community systems, ensuring that refugee women are participants and decision makers in this process. She stressed the importance of moving from an emergency response to development.

#### **Andrew Harper**

As noted above, Andrew introduced the imperative of moving the debate away from “Gender sensitive”, and on to “Gender transformative”. He saw that a key objective for this session was to get support on the ground to local communities, and down to the national level. He made the point that women MUST be at the table, that resilience cannot be prioritized for affluent, developed nations or for men only, and stressed the goal that NO ONE [including women] can be left behind. He stated that, to achieve this, we must stop being patriarchal, scrap top-down approaches and empower those in the centre of the emergencies, and that women must be at the centre of decision making.

#### **HE Ambassador to Fiji - Nazhat Shameem Khan**

Nazhat made an incredibly strong statement about the plight of women and girls and was the first panellist in the HCD to openly and inclusively refer to LGBTI communities and include them in her presentation as an absolute norm. Thank you, Ambassador. Let’s hope these attitudes can carry forward into all aspects of the outcomes of the Global Compact. Her statement was so critical to the debate we have included it verbatim:

*“We know that even when there is no disaster, that there is a problem with access to justice, access to health systems, access to an investigative process at a police station for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. And what happens in a disaster, of course, is that those limitations and that lack of access is exacerbated. Because those institutions are not able to function in a disaster. Add to that the risk associated with living in evacuation centres and living amongst people you don't know, being separated from those whom you might rely upon, and also having difficulties with accessing toilets, for instance, showers. So, I think it really so important that when a country is building resilience and is building up systems for responding to disasters, that it looks at that process from the lived experiences of women, of LGBTI, of children who are more likely to be victims of sexual and gender-based violence. It's those lived experience that help those who plan resilience, to ensure they have an eye out for health systems and to justice to the police stations for instance, and are not frustrated by a disaster or an emergency. And there's only one effective way of doing that. It's by asking the women. It's by asking the LGBTI community.*

*You can't build a resilient system without an inclusive and participatory process from those who are is an empowering process. We should stop looking at women as victims and stop looking at people as being vulnerable and really ensure that, in preparing for a disaster, we go through an empowering process of participation and consultation, making sure that those who are most impacted are the ones who are on the table and who are part of the planning process. I think that's the only sure way*

*of protecting those who may be subjected to sexual and gender-based violence and ensuring t's part of a national system for sexual and gender-based violence. Look, I come from a country where sexual and gender-based violence is a huge risk. We have high numbers of such cases. And we know that really building every system in Fiji must ensure looking out for sexual and gender-based violence and access to systems that protect people. And the way that we have learned is the most effective way of ensuring that we do build resilient systems in relation to sexual and gender-based violence is by ensuring that everyone is at the table. Thank you.*

She ended by stating that “...voices that have never been heard before must now be heard”.

### **Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim – Environmental activist, and refugee advocate**

Hindou also made a very strong intervention on the power and place of women at the table:

*We need to make it two levels, at international level where decisions are being made, not just counting the numbers of how many women we have on the panel and how many men to do a check box. We want the voice of the women to be a reality and to be participating in the decision making. They need to listen to women, Indigenous women, who have the solutions, whose voices are not here at international level. Don't come [to us] with a ready project but come as a partner to design all the thing together.*

### **Analysis and Reflection**

Thanks go to Gillian Triggs and Andrew Harper for the way in which they **normalised** the inclusion of an age, gender and diversity framework throughout their presentations and comments. This was both impressive and effective. At times, in a response to the usual absence of AGD, the pendulum can swing too far, and self-conscious “gender add-ons” diminish the message. The *matter-of-fact* way in which they were included by Gillian and Andrew left no doubt that they were core to the discussion and the response.

### ***The Elephant in the Room***

Sadly, in the first round of otherwise excellent and thought-provoking presentations, none of the panellists, nor the chair, mentioned gender, despite gender issues being central to the positions they were arguing. Neither was the intersectional nature of the experiences of climate change implicitly mentioned. This was despite the superb briefing note distributed before the session "Gender, Displacement and Climate Change" co-authored by Andrew Harper with Dr Kia Vinke. The AGD Framework and policy was the “elephant in the room”, implicit in everything they presented, but never articulated.

Fortunately, in the second session, the chair asked a question based on submissions from the Gender Audit team which actually named the elephant and gave panel members permission to address it. There were passionate and insightful responses from Ambassador Khan and from Hindou Ibrahim, naming the impacts of emergencies and disaster, including endemic SGBV, on refugee and displaced women and girls and the knowledge that, without their full involvement and participation, nothing will change.

One outcome of the HCD could be to take the “elephant” out of the room, so that people with such passion and knowledge about the impact of issues on women and girls, as well as the massive contributions they make, do not feel that they cannot openly express them, without “permission” through questions. Age, gender and diversity must be overtly discussed. Women and girls are over 50% of the refugee population and we cannot afford to dismiss the human rights abuses they suffer and the contributions they can make. For this to happen we need inspirational leadership from UNHCR senior staff and good chairs who are gender aware. It needs key stakeholders, including the humanitarian community, to make the major move from Gender sensitivity to gender empowerment. We must recognize that resilience will not happen without women being as included as men.

### ***The discourse of Vulnerability***



Until the recent past, refugee women and girls were most often talked about as being a vulnerable minority, with the implication that vulnerability was a female attribute. The assumption is that women are usually helpless and in need of protection. The language of vulnerability was used repeatedly in this session, in the context climate change, fragile economies, and communities, also stressing that women are some of the most vulnerable within those communities. This language must change from women needed protecting, to an acknowledgement of the structural issues which makes life more dangerous for many women. It must acknowledge that without structures in place to enable all women to use their skills, traditional knowledges and wisdom to tackle problems, nothing will be fully effective. If we continue to classify women as vulnerable at a personal/individual level they will remain silenced, their skills underutilized, and gender equality a dream. In preparing effective responses to disasters, we must go through an empowering process of participation and consultation with all women and girls. This must be reflected in the discourse about vulnerable communities. This position was strongly reinforced by the responses from Ambassador Khan and Hindou.

## **Recommendations**

- That in all strategies to encourage inclusion, resilience and adaptation to climate change (and in all future protection planning), the role of all women and other diverse categories be acknowledged and addressed, and be a KPI in all funding applications and program design.
- That UNHCR formalise the normalization of the inclusion of Age, Gender and Diversity, and gender transformative language that was demonstrated in this (and other) sessions in the HCD and ensure that this becomes standard operating practice in all future meetings, conferences and briefing notes.
- That in a similar manner the word “prostitution” was replaced in the discourse about refugee women to that of “being forced to sell or exchange sex”, the notion of “vulnerable women” be replaced with the discourse of “women in vulnerable situations” and that suggested solutions be adapted accordingly, from those focused on protecting the helpless, to those of empowering women to protect themselves.
- That in the course of follow-up to the HCD, UNHCR elicits other key stakeholders to answer questions in the Q and A sections of each session.

## **QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS**

As noted above, while the gender content was exceptionally good, there was not much of it. In the course of the session, Women and girls were mentioned six times, Age, Gender and Diversity twice. Youth were mentioned twice and the LGBTI community twice. SGBV was addressed once.

## **FEEDBACK ON THE ZOOM Q AND A AND UNHCR APP QUESTIONS.**

From a total of 24 comments, questions and statements posted across the Zoom Q&A platform, two had a gendered lens. Both came from a Gender Audit team (GAT) member. One of the questions addressed children and psychological support. One mentioned particularly youth activists. No question mentioned persons with a disability. The questions were answered by the very efficient UNHCR team.

Thank you.

## **Annexe 8: Summary Report, High Commissioners Dialogue (HCD) Closing Meeting, December 2nd, 2020. Virtual Meeting**

Authors: Eileen Pittaway, Linda Bartolomei, Shaza Al Rihawi, Andrea Ayala, Apajok Biar, Tina Dixon, Hafsar Tameesuddin, Najeeba Wazefadost

<b>Meeting name:</b>	High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges – Preparing for Protection and Solutions in the Future (9 Dec 2020)	
<b>Session Name and Focus:</b>	Closing Session with High Commissioner Filippo Grandi - UNHCR	
<b>Facilitator(s):</b>	Dana Hughes – part 1 Anushay Hossain –part 2	
<b>panellists:</b>	<p>Andrés Alfonso Ramírez – México</p> <p>Raquel Vargas Jaubert – Costa Rica</p> <p>Ibrahim Malagoni – Niger</p> <p>Maria Nazareth Farani – Brazil</p> <p>Rachel Levitan – HIAS</p> <p>Hasfar Tameesuddin – Gender Audit Team</p> <p>Rui Macieira – Portugal</p> <p>Azza Karam - Religion for peace (Religious)</p> <p>Gilberto Marcos Antonio Rodrigues - Sergio de Viero Chair. (Academia)</p> <p>Michael Botzung- International Financial Corporation (Private sector)</p> <p>Jayathma Wickramanayake - Youth Envoy</p>	<p>Jutta Urpilainen - European Commissioner</p> <p>David Nabarro – WHL</p> <p>Michael Freiherr – Germany</p> <p>Kareen Jarabee - International Parliament Union</p> <p>Veneranda Ingabire – Uganda</p> <p>Anh Thu Duong - Geneva Cities Hub</p> <p>George Ortha – Department of Justice Philippines</p> <p>Yasmin Sherif - Lebanon</p> <p>Bahati Ernestine Hategetkimana – Refugee in Kenya</p> <p>Hilda Kausiwa – Malawi</p> <p>Maha Al Barjas</p>
<b>Place and Time:</b>	Geneva, December 9th, 2020 - virtual session	

## GENDER HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SESSION

What was outstanding in the final session of the HCD 2020 was the very strong leadership on Gender and AGD from the High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi. Framed in the context of the importance of **trust** to achieve our collective goals, he acknowledged **the rise in SGBV** during COVID-19, and its impacts, including being forced to sell or exchange sex and the imperative to address these issues. He constantly referenced the meaningful inclusion of **women and girls** at the decision-making table and **included the LGBTI** community in his discussion and recommendations. The strong recognition of the role played in the response to the pandemic **by refugee-led organisations**, in particular **women-led organisations**, and the need to provide both space and support, was clearly spelled out. He stated that their place at the decision-making table must become fully recognised and included in all future planning and responses. To achieve this, we have to develop frameworks which provide legitimacy and validity for these organisations and the refugee representatives whose voices are making such a difference. He summarised by requesting that we do not politicise the response to refugees, IDPs and people on the move. We must work together to address this.

## KEY POINTS FROM THE PANEL PRESENTATIONS.

***Common issues which were raised by panellists, but not discussed as being gender specific or AGD inclusive, which equally apply to all refugees.***

While the majority of the presentations were positive and forward looking, some were of particular note.

There was a strong focus on inclusion – that no-one must be left behind. Bahati Hategetkimana discussed the importance of investing in refugees. Refugees want to *be supporters* rather than *recipients* of aid. She stated that being involved [in solutions] put refugees on the same level to everyone else, and that the thought of equality was powerful and positive. Jutta Urpilainen, The European Commissioner raised the issue of access to education for all children. She also spoke strongly of the imperative of including refugee communities in COVID-19 vaccination programming across the world. George Ortha from the Department of Justice, the Philippines, called for inclusive measures to ensure that the most vulnerable and persons of concern are not left behind.

***Gender specific comments made in presentations and responses***

High Commissioner Filippo Grandi, in a number of extremely strong statements, acknowledged that “...*there is no doubt that the levels of gender-based violence .... has increased during the pandemic. We know that. We see it certainly in the communities we deal with.... the great majority of refugees, of displaced people, live in communities that are often among the most marginalized. They are marginalized themselves because of the displacement and they exist in communities that have already some challenges from that point of view.... Those are situations in which gender-based violence unfortunately escalates and has escalated in the pandemic. The poverty inflicted on refugees, the displaced, and often host communities, by the lockdowns, by the pandemic, essentially, has been, unfortunately, a tragic driver of violence. Especially violence against women, against LGBTI communities or individuals*”.

*“The example was given of women, young women, girls that used to go to school - and God knows how much work we have done in the past few years to try to increase the enrolment figures among refugee girls and boys as well - everything has dropped now all over the world for kids because schools were closed. When schools reopen, we don't see the girls coming back. Because meanwhile, poverty has struck so much in their families that unfortunately for them, the future is bleak. It ranges from forced marriages to exploitation and sometimes “being forced to sell or exchange sex for goods and services”. All of these are forms, of course, of gender-based violence and sometimes it is physical violence and worse”.*

In order to address these issues, he outlined the following challenges to the humanitarian/development sector. *“We need specialized activities to address gender-based violence. Activities to address prevention and care for victims and cash to alleviate poverty. It is important that all organizations set aside resources for that. Because these things cannot happen just because we talk about them in fora, you have to set it up when you budget, when you program, you have to say this is for that [to address gender-based violence] Otherwise, the priorities slip and move to another...”*

*“We need to create more safe spaces. I have been championing this set of issues also in the humanitarian community and in my organization. This is always a very big problem, especially when abuse occurs. If you don't have safe spaces, both to speak out and to live, sometimes, because women are threatened or LGBTI people are threatened, you miss out. That violence will become invisible. Then it is impossible to try and prevent and address it. Finally, really working with organizations.... [by] diversifying partnerships to organizations that are led by women, that are led by LGBTI individuals, that are led by members of communities that are particularly at risk, ensuring that they are organized ..[and] supporting their organizations in order for them to be effective”.*

Ibrahim Malagoni from Niger articulated the often-overlooked need for hygiene products as part of the protection needs of the most vulnerable,

Rachel Levitan, HIAS made a very strong presentation addressing a range of AGD issues.

*“There is a clear dramatic increase in high-levels of intimate partner violence, trafficking and other form of GVB since the start of the pandemic approximating really what is a shadow pandemic. ... So, based on the voices of the women and girls and other survivors that HIAS works with, we have three recommendations.*

First, to Governments and NGOs: You should expand specialized GBV response services, ensuring they are accessible to all survivors, young, old, with disabilities, LGBTIQ and male survivors. Establish safe spaces for women and adolescent girls to build supportive relationships and engage in safety planning and also increase programming that integrates GBV with economic inclusion involving the private sector and financial institutions.

Second, to donors: Building on outcomes from the Global Refugee Forum and UNHCR/NGO consultations should fund community-based approaches to GBV in Venezuela, host countries and other regional emergencies and should fund initiatives that specifically address child, early and forced marriages, which is a huge and under-recognized problem regionally.

Third, and finally, **all** agencies must regularly train on the prevention of sexual exploitation abuse and implement safe and confidential reporting mechanisms.

Kareen Jarabee, International Parliament Union, talked of the importance of inclusive decision making with all sectors of society, including women.

In a passionate presentation Yasmin Sherif of Lebanon stated:

*“Amongst those left behind are girls, young girls, adolescent girls, refugee girls, girls with disabilities and especially now during COVID-19, they are among the most vulnerable groups on the planet. In UNHCR's most recent education report, 48% of refugee children are out of school today. Girls are half as likely as boys to be enrolled at the secondary level. 50% of refugee girls may never return to school.*

*So for girls, secondary education is a way of protecting them from sexual exploitation, early marriages and early childbirth. For them, it is about protection and human rights. And Education Cannot Wait, gathering with partners with World Bank and world partnership for education, made a commitment last year at the Global Refugee Forum to focus specifically on refugee girls and education.”*

Hafsar Tameesuddin, on behalf of the Gender Audit Team, presented what they saw as the highlights from the 6 meetings of the HCD.

*“The things that made the Gender Audit Team excited were as follows. **However**, this is what we would like to see happen, rather than what happens now.*

*The most important recognition by UNHCR and other key stakeholders was that in order to address gender inequality, we have to move from using the language of “gender sensitivity, to that of “**gender transformation**”, and that all programs have to have this as a key aim.*

*The next was the acknowledgement of the skills and knowledge, and the role that **all women and girls** and refugee-led organisations already play as first responders.*

*There was **a real recognition** that without supporting **the inclusion of women and girls in all aspects** of the response to COVID-19, climate change and other potential disasters, the responses will not be effective. However, there is an urgent need to provide **adequate funding, resources and structures** to allow this to happen.*

*We also need transparent consultation between refugee communities, including all women and girls, NGOs, INGOs, civil societies and donors.*

*An important recognition was the need to acknowledge and respond to **the rights of LGBTI** communities and apply ASPIRE guidelines to assist states to fulfil their obligations to prevent and mitigate the impact of COVID 19 on LGBTI persons.*

*The areas which must be addressed to achieve gender transformation are the provision of reproductive health care and response to victims/survivors of SGBV. Education for all refugee women and girls is a major key **to gender equality and to prevent SGBV**. All women must have access to justice and equal access to livelihoods, inclusion of all women, including women with a disability.*

*In conclusion equality means equal access to vaccination for all refugees and IDPs. Thank you”*

*Jayathma Wickramanayake*, the Youth Envoy spoke in great detail about how the COVID19 has impacted young Refugees. Talked of the mentioned the plight of young women, the LGBTIQ community, Indigenous communities, and those who are most vulnerable and who face ongoing challenges. She also noted that young girls are suffering disproportionately, and that many will not be able to resume their classes. There is a drastic rise in GBV and many are not safe in their homes. Members of the LGBTIQ community are isolated in those same communities who routinely abuse them. Yet, despite these problems the youth are often first responders in their camps. They have assessed the needs of their communities and responded by using crowd funding. They then provide context specific support to address their exact needs.

*Anushay Hossain* – Bangladesh (Moderator 2) also addressed the gender impact of the pandemic and asked how the international community can better focus their efforts to provide an effective SGBV global response.

## **Analysis and Reflection**

The disappointing aspect of the session was that only seven respondents in the fishbowl mentioned Gender, AGD, women and girls. This is an indication that key stakeholders in the response to refugees are not articulating an AGD approach to their work, despite the commitments in the GCR and pledges made around the GRF. We still have a LONG way to go. However, the comments that were made were on the whole strong, inclusive and with excellent recommendations.

### **Re Refugee representation and inclusion.**

Once again, we congratulate the High Commissioner for raising what is sometimes a contentious issue and speaking strongly on the need for meaningful inclusion. He stated that it is not enough for refugees just to have a voice, they should also have a “Vote” in what happens to them and their communities. They must have genuine inclusion and an equal place at the table. It would mean that their voices would be listened to, not just heard. Refugee-led organisations give validity to the voices and are representative of communities. It is critical that these steps be taken because refugees, particularly women, girls and members of the LGBTIQ community, as well as male leaders, often risk their lives to have their voices heard. As the High Commissioner noted, there is no other way for refugee communities to ‘vote’ in the decisions which govern their lives, from the local level to the international stage.

The Gender Audit Team, who conducted the documentation and analysis of the 6 HCD dialogue meetings, represent all of the five UN designated world regions and were recruited because of their direct links to a range of refugee-led organizations, a long history of advocacy and continuing interactions with refugee populations across the world. Given the strong emphasis on support for refugee-led organizations, and for ensuring that the voices of refugees are truly representative of a broad range of refugees, they would welcome the opportunity to meet with the High Commissioner, not to discuss their own organizations, but to present to him a range of proven strategies and activities developed to ensure that their work is representative, and recommendations for models which could be more widely used. This would include strategies to ensure that women also “vote”. They have clearly demonstrated their commitment and ability in the excellent work they have undertaken in this audit process.

However, they reiterate that this is a **Gender** audit. While it is acknowledged that ALL refugees share many basic needs, the key point is to recognize that refugee women and girls, men and boys have different experiences, and that all of these need to be addressed. It must not be assumed that “one size fits all”. This has to be addressed before we can achieve the goal of gender equality, which is basic to the UNHCR AGD Policy and Framework.

### **Recommendation**

That the Gender Audit team meet with the High Commissioner and his team in the New Year to share the good practice examples of consultation and representation that they have undertaken ahead of each of the HCD meetings, and to discuss what “legitimacy” looks like for displaced women and girls and LGBTIQ advocates, highlighting common experiences from all five regions of the world. The team can discuss their recommendations to fulfill the commitments of inclusion, in particular the inclusion and recognition of refugee and IDP women and girls. They wish to explore how best to validate the refugee voices which have

now been so clearly heard into “votes” for the strategies, programs and new initiatives, along with the “votes” from all other key stakeholders such as INGO’s NGOs faith-based organisations and donors.

### **QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS**

As mentioned above, UNHCR provided strong leadership which focused on women, girls, LGBTI communities, and the AGD Framework. Only 6 of the 20 respondents and one facilitator mentioned AGD in any way. Overall, there were three mentions of women and girls, four of age, gender and diversity, five of youth, three of LGBTI, and six of SGBV.

### **FEEDBACK ON THE ZOOM Q AND A AND UNHCR APP QUESTIONS.**

This lack of AGD inclusion was repeated in the questions submitted on the Q and A. Of the 27 questions, only 13 referred to gender, and the majority of those were submitted by the Gender Audit team. Once again, the majority of these were answered by UNHCR personnel, who provided some very useful information and links. However, it would have been good to have heard responses from members states and other key stakeholders. The majority of the answers reiterated, and expanded on, the commitments made by the High Commissioner in his remarks. Key points in the response included the importance of the UNHCR Results Framework, community-based protection and the Community of Practice as important tools to address AGD issues. SGBV was referred to as a “shadow pandemic” and it was emphasised that perpetrators must be brought to account. UNHCR acknowledged the pervasive under-resourcing of this issue. LGBTI communities were named as among those most affected by COVID-19 and, in response, UNHCR is working on a stakeholder approach with civil society. In spring 2021 they will be hosting a Global Roundtable on LGBTI issues. They mentioned the need for transformative programming and mentioned that forcibly displaced people are the experts on their own situation and should be treated as such. They noted that funding must be expanded to engage with women-led refugee organisations and reiterated responses on specific issues mentioned in previous sessions of the HCD 2020.

Thank you.