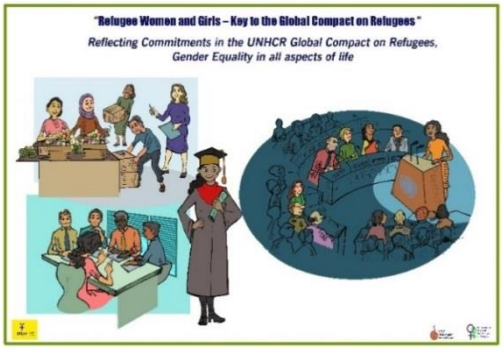
Global Refugee Forum

Gender Audit

Second Preparatory Meeting

25 June 2019

UNHCR Geneva



The Gender Audit Process

A successful Gender Audit of the Thematic meetings for the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the High Commissioner's Dialogue in 2017 contributed significantly to the inclusion of strong gender commitments in the GCR. The audit team is now working with UNHCR Geneva to document the process of the implementation of these commitments. This includes the three preparatory meetings for the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), March, June and November 2019 and the Forum itself, December 2019. The Gender Audit process will ensure that the commitments made to refugee women and girls in the GCR are acknowledged in the Pledging, Co-sponsorship, and Co-convening process. These commitments include: gender equality, the implementation of the UNHCR Age Gender and Diversity (AGD) Policy; addressing the different needs of women and men across the life cycle including in childhood and adolescence; considering the impact of discriminations based on sexuality, gender identity and disability and strong promises to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). There will be an emphasis on the importance of the commitments to women and girls, AGD approach and SGBV prevention and response across the key areas of education, jobs and livelihoods, responsibility sharing, energy and infrastructure, solutions and protection capacity. It will document examples of good practice in these areas.

Background to the Gender Audit Process

A Gender Audit documents the discussion of Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), with a particular focus on women and girls in each meeting and combines the findings into a comprehensive report with recommendations. The Gender Audit of the thematic meetings for the draft Compact and the High Commissioners Dialogue, 2017 was extremely successful and contributed to the inclusion of a strong AGD and SGBV focus with commitments to women and girls in the final document[1].

[1] https://www.unhcr.org/search?cid=49aea93aa7&scid=49aea93a57&tags=women, Search under Gender Audit.

The audit team consists of two academics from the University of New South Wales, Australia, (UNSW) and five refugee women from diverse backgrounds and regions of the world. In 2017, they were: Tina Dixon, Ukraine, Apajok Biar, South Sudan, Shaza Al Rihawi, Syria, Cheery Zahau, Burma and Melika Yassin Sheikh Eldin, Eritrea, with Associate Professor Eileen Pittaway and Dr Linda Bartolomei, UNSW, assisted by Charlotte Bell and Ms Geraldine Doney, UNSW. The Gender audit of the first Preparatory Meeting, March 2019, was conducted by Ms Shaza Al Rihawi, Syria, and Ms Foni Joyce, South Sudan.

The major recommendations from the Gender Audit of the First Preparatory meeting, June 2017 were:

- That UNHCR continues to advocate for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the local, national and international levels and with all Stakeholders.

- That disaggregation of data according to Age Gender and Diversity must be made a priority across all areas and co-sponsorship groups.

- That there must be a stronger focus on Gender Equality, Refugee Women and Girls and a Response to SGBV in the Pledging Process, and as a focus for the Global Refugee Forum.

- That the people organising the Preparatory Meetings and the Global Forum on Refugees increase the representation of women and gender related input in the panels.

As can be seen in this report, these recommendations still need urgent attention.

The gender audit team for the Second preparatory Meeting, 2019 was: Ms Apajok Biar, South Sudan, Ms Shaza Al Rihawi, Syria, and Ms Noor Azizah, Rohingya/Burma, Dr Linda Bartolomei, Associate Professor Eileen Pittaway UNSW and Ms Effie Mitchell, UNSW. This report also includes observations from the 75th Standing Committee discussion related to the GCR and the GRF. Two round table meetings were hosted by the Australian Mission, Geneva prior to and immediately following the Second Preparatory meeting, and input for those has been included in the recommendations. A short report of the key outcomes of these meetings is included in Annex 1.

Key issues from the second preparatory meeting and side events with observations from the gender audit team and recommendations

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

Interventions from many country representatives noted areas of interest for co-sponsorship, and detailed sub themes, all of which could have a strong AGD component, but their interventions did not directly address this. Others noted that while their governments were considering areas of interest, they were not yet ready to commit. Of specific note was a lack of mention of gender disaggregated data collection, which is key to most of the activities/areas proposed. This was despite a strong focus on this as part of the discussion on Indicators at the First Preparatory meeting. See Annex 2 for a tabular analysis of AGD commitments across the six co-sponsorship areas from all Stakeholders.

Across the meetings, while it was encouraging to see that a number of men spoke strongly and supportively of addressing the needs of women and girls and of addressing diversity, the majority who addressed these issues were women. While the AGD Framework was mentioned, this was not unpacked to explore what it would actually mean in practice. With the exception of the side event on AGD, the specific but often very

different experiences and needs of refugee women and girls, men and boys were neither analysed nor discussed. The importance of receiving adequate sanitary materials was also only mentioned briefly in the side event, yet this is a major barrier to girls and women accessing education, training, and livelihoods, as it also has implications for women and girls' health - all of which are critical to participation.

When gender or sexual and gender-based violence were mentioned they were more often than not subsumed as acronyms, (AGD and SGBV) and the acronyms not spelled out. This renders women and girls invisible and the horror of sexual and gender-based violence is reduced to four quickly spoken letters. When issues are not clearly articulated, they are not addressed. There is a lack of awareness of the intersectionality of the issues. Despite a significant body of current evidence from refugee sites around the world, and powerful presentations and interventions from refugee women, there is still a reluctance to name sexual and gender-based violence as a major barrier to the participation of many refugee women and girls. If it is acknowledged all too often it is with a narrow focus on domestic violence which weakens attention on the sexual violence experienced in transit, at borders, in schools, by military, by police, and the violence of being forced to exchange sex for essential resources such as food. Nor does it cover the issues of children born of rape, and of child marriage.

In all meetings there was a very strong consensus on the importance of refugee participation from the local level through to decision making at the very highest levels. This included participation in education, livelihoods programs, access to health care services, and to advocacy opportunities. It specified inclusion in all decision making and planning meetings. A key point made by several speakers was that participation must be real, not tokenistic, and to achieve this, refugees will need support and resources. The refugee network and ICVA statements all emphasised the importance of ensuring that refugee women and girls were equally represented in all decision-making fora, however the majority of interventions by States were gender blind. In the side event on Age, Gender and Diversity the lack of disaggregated data, by gender, age and diversity was seen as a major roadblock to achieving gender parity and effective service protection for all refugees. Without this, the situation of refugee populations cannot be fully understood, and their needs will not be addressed.

While these issues were raised strongly by NGOs, refugee women, UNHCR staff, and some member states, overall, the response was disappointing by comparison with the strong support for action on SGBV and on commitments to refugee women and girls during the 75th Standing Committee meeting held the previous week. (See Annex 3 for the list of Members states and key quotes).

Responsibility sharing and the need for many more non-traditional actors to support with pledges, technical, financial and political were a prominent theme. The representative of Ethiopia stated that:

> *Pledges need to be action orientated. With the growing funding gap, resettlement and complimentary pathways need to be given priority.*

While there was enthusiastic discussion around co-sponsorship groups and the pledging process, very few Member States were ready to make pledges or commit to co-sponsorship groups. The representative from Germany commented that:

> *It will need more than the 20% of countries now involved. We need concrete pledges to improve lives and to showcase good practices.*

While acknowledging that at the time of the meeting, many Member States were still considering the pledges they might make, there was very little specific mention or discussion of AGD, women and girls, nor of addressing SGBV in relation to potential pledges. It is important to note that only a few member states

consistently wove these themes throughout their interventions and promises, with others showing interest, but not yet ready to commit. Many interventions had a strong implied gender component, but these links were not made explicitly. The strongest inputs on Gender in the whole meeting came from the refugee networks, the NGOs, a few supportive Member States and the Gender Audit team. This indicates the importance that refugees and services providers in the field place on addressing gender inequality, the specific needs of women and girls and of diverse and vulnerable groups. As well as and ways of providing effective prevention, mitigation and response to sexual and gender-based violence as part of potential solutions to the refugee crises. This comes directly from their lived experience and their experience of addressing the problems at the ground level and confirms the critical role they need to play in the implementation and monitoring of the gender commitments in the GCR.

Theme of refugee participation

Genuine and meaningful refugee participation was the most prominent theme across the day and in every session. Positive statements supporting women and girls and embedding an AGD approach through the process were made. The World Bank committed that AGD considerations and voices of refugees will be at the heart of solutions. Several member states promised that Gender and disability would be integral to their pledges. There was a call to ensure that gender equality and an AGD approach would be specifically anchored in all co-sponsorship groups, and that there be a regional balance across all groups. Perveen Ali, UNHCR emphasised the importance of the sharing of good practice. She noted that it is envisaged that refugees will be in all formal and side events at the Global Forum on Refugees. A strong ICVA statement demonstrated a commitment from the NGO Sector to gender issues:

> *NGOs believe that refugees, both resettled and in host countries must speak for themselves and play a key role in determining how to prioritize policies, programmes, implementation and financing processes. Equal number of refugee women and men should be included, with representation of young people, disability organisations and other communities. We therefore call for a credible and AGD sensitive accountability framework to track pledges and contributions, to be finalized before the Forum.*

Volker Turk concluded that we need to take an AGD approach in all activities undertaken to ensure that diverse groups of refugees are included. He noted that pledges and indicators must be linked in order to have a better tracking system in collaboration with the OECD and the World Bank.

General Recommendations

- That UNHCR encourages member States to join them in implementing the strong commitments made in the Global Compact on Refugees to Women and Girls, addressing SGBV, and operationalising all aspects of the Age, Gender and Diversity Policy by ensuring that these are explicitly addressed in each agenda item and side event at the third Preparatory meeting in November, addressing organisational matters at the Global Refugee Forum.
- That organisers of the Spotlight Events at the Global Forum on Refugees should be requested to ensure that an Age, Gender and Diversity approach is taken in each session, and other related activities, such as the Visual displays and Market Place, whatever the topic, and that guidelines be issued by UNHCR to assist them to do this.
- That the GRF organisers ensure that at least one speaker in each High-level Dialogue and Plenary at the Global Refugee Forum will address age, gender and diversity issues, including

commitments to women and girls, and sexual and gender based violence, and that the chairs be briefed to ensure that these issues are mentioned in interventions and discussion.

- Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) is the "elephant in the room" and the greatest barrier to fulfilling the commitments made to women and girls in the GCR and the UNHCR AGD Policy. Space must be allocated in one of the Thematic Spotlight sessions on either Tuesday 17 or Wednesday 18 December for this to be addressed, and must have a high profile speaker and convenor such as the Deputy High Commissioner, and sponsorship from member states from the global south and the global north to ensure a full attendance, and to encourage the participation of members states that do not usually attend side events on SGBV.
- That there be a dedicated Gender champion to support the inclusion of an AGD approach and the articulated inclusion of women and girls, and the need to address SGBV in each co-sponsorship Group and Pledges made.
- That age, gender and diversity disaggregated data must be collected at all stages of response to the refugee crisis in all six co-sponsorship areas and across all pledges made. This includes a tool to establish need, program design and implementation, through to monitoring the effectiveness of actions taken. An agreed structure and baseline for the collection of AGD data collection and monitoring must be developed for universal usage in the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees. This could be done in conjunction with the Wold Bank funded data centre and in collaboration with the OECD.
- That there should be separate side events in the Global Refuge Forum on women and girls, and SGBV as the major barrier to gender equality. Separate events on Disability, Youth, LGBTIQ, and Older refugees are also needed. All of these must highlight gender and age as crosscutting issues.
- That information and materials be made available to Member States explaining the intersectional nature of gender and diversity and the need for good practice to inform the complex webs of challenges experienced by refugees. Solutions, which address only one part of the problem usually fail. (For example, good livelihood programs for women and girls have to take into account lack of sanitary materials, lack of access to education and training, protection from SGBV in transit or in the workplace, freedom from exploitation, skills, and markets, lack of childcare etc)
- That the Digital Platform of Good practice being developed by UNHCR be fully resourced over a sustained period to provide maximum support to members states and other stakeholders wishing to implement innovative responses to the GCR, and that the Portal has a specific section on implementing the AGD Framework, with a focus on women and girls and responding to SGBV.

Key recommendations specifically linked to the six co-sponsorship groups have been incorporated into six concept notes which have been shared with the UNHCR group convenors. These can be found at https://www.unhcr.org/resources-5cc1a4e94.html Under Further Resources: UNSW Gender Audit

FULL REPORT SECOND GRF PREPARATORY MEETING JUNE 2019

As noted above, the role of the gender audit team is to record the gender content of the meeting, with a focus on women and girls, sexual and gender-based violence and gender equality in refugee participation. The following extracts are taken from their detailed documentation of each of the meetings.

Morning Side Event Tuesday 25 June 2019 9.30am -10.30am

Leaving No One Behind - Understanding A Gender, Age and Diversity Approach to Pledges and Good Practices in The Global Refugee Forum

Chair: Manisha Thomas, Geneva representative, Women's Refugee Commission,

Panel: Apajok Biar, South Sudan Voices of Salvation/Gender Audit Team, Enzo Mauro T Cruz, Girls in Crisis Policy and Advocacy Officer, Plan International, Achayo Obol, Board of Directors, National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda.

The focus of the side meeting was operationalising commitments made to women and girls, youth, the elderly, persons with a disability and other diverse groups in the six co-sponsorship groups and pledges to be made at the Global Refugee Forum. The event was well attended with over 60 participants.

The chair and the panellists made strong representation and analysis of the importance and inclusion of women and girls in all aspects of refugee participation. This includes: in local meetings; on decisions affecting programs and services in each site; inclusion on camp committees; inclusion in education, health services, livelihoods; protection and response to SGBV; advocacy opportunities at a local national and international level. All presenters and participants, including UNHCR staff, refugee representatives, members states and other key stakeholders spoke about the importance of an approach which examined the specific needs of diverse groups. Panellists maintained a central focus on the particular needs of women and girls while applying an intersectional analysis to the additional risks that some women and girls face based on age, ability and sexuality.

Enzo Mauro T Cruz noted that there is a gap in capturing how forced displacement affects different groups of refugees. Girls are made invisible in many refugee responses and donor's strategic plans. Sometimes, the term girls is simply added to women as in 'women and girls', without actually differentiating the specific problems that affect them. Apajok Biar argued that we have to recognise the particular barriers that women and girls face – one of the biggest ones being sexual and gender-based violence. She argued that we must also recognise the huge contributions that refugee women and girls can make, noting that women and girls have agency and the need to steer away from a tokenistic approach to their participation and involvement. She stressed that refugee women's community-based organization must have a seat at the table and be provided with support and to ensure that their participation is sustainable and goes beyond story telling. She also noted that if refugee women and girls in all their diversity are to be meaningfully included they have to be visible and the gender related human rights abuses they face also need to be acknowledged. Key to this is the collection of data disaggregated by gender, age, disability and diversity.

Rose Achayo, argued that women and girls with disabilities were frequently left behind with no one catering to their specific needs or engaging with them. She noted the particular risks of sexual violence, abuse; and harassment they face and the language barriers that frequently prevent them from accessing safety and justice**.**

Noor Azizah, a Rohingya refugee spoke passionately about the need for the recognition of the needs of refugee women and girls. She described her experience as a refugee.

> *While other children were going to school or playing with friends, my family and I were making our way through the thick jungles, avoiding death on every turn, sleeping on roads and scavenging for food. Today, I find myself holding the voices of Rohingyan women who have faced unimaginable atrocities in*

a place I once called "home" this includes systematic rape, torture and the murder of family and friends. The simplicity of giving respect to Rohingyan women does not cost any money. All we are asking is for Rohingyan women and girls to be given a voice and for our opinion to matter.

Shaza Al Rihawi, a Syrian refugee stated that to be called a refugee is not a shame or an insult. It is label of strength, courage and victory.

I am here today, not for storytelling, but to let the voices of other females be heard, not as victims but as actors of change for themselves and their communities

She noted that real participation occurs when women are sharing in all the policy processes from designing through to implementation, then in evaluation. To ensure that happens, we need to have sustainable resources and support for this participation, so it does not turn to tokenisation. She also mentioned the intersectional nature of the barriers faced by refugee women.

We must also note that while being female is a challenge, combine it with a disability, being older, or even younger, she will lack access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, endure sexual and gender-based violence. Imagine being a young person in a wheelchair trying to get to the bathroom in a camp, how difficult it would be. Imagine now the same situation with a female having her period.

In interventions and responses, Catherine Gill, Australian Representative, endorsed the value of side events and meetings which gave refugee women a platform and stressed the importance of gender disaggregated data collection to provide a base-line for action. The need for a mechanism by which there was an AGD and good practice approach in each co-sponsorship group was mentioned by several participants, to ensure that adequate resources were available to take these commitments forward. It was noted that this need not be resource intensive but can build on existing mechanisms. The importance of involving men and boys in gender mainstreaming was stressed and the importance of involving the private sector as champions of change was also discussed. UNHCR and other UN bodies were challenged to think about more senior positions for women, as a way of modelling gender equality.

AGENDA ITEM ONE - 25 June 2019 10.15am – 12.30pm

Organisational arrangements for the Global Refugee Forum (including co-sponsorships)

Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Volker Turk introduced the session, setting out UNHCR's vision for the Global Refugee Forum as forward looking and ambitious. '*Success*', he said '*would be measured by an increase in the base of support from all UN member States as well as new actors, in particular the private sector'*. He noted that many States were already working on pledges, informed by an Age, Gender and Diversity perspective. Daniel Endres, UNHCR Director, Global Refugee Forum outlined the facilitating role UNHCR would take. He noted that it is envisaged that refugees will participate in all sponsorship groups and in the organisational arrangements for the Global Refugee Forum. He further noted that UNHCR is very encouraged by the number of confirmations of co-sponsorships already received, 30 in total with 130 areas of specific interest outlined.

Twenty four member states made interventions during this session. However only five member states mentioned age, gender and diversity issues, with four specifically mentioning women and girls. Notably,

Sweden advocated for inclusive education for people such as people with disabilities and gender equality for girls and boys. They also noted that they would like to be observers in all co-sponsorship groups with a focus on gender equality and SGBV matters as part of a tri-nexus issue/solution. Germany shared positive examples and lessons learnt to support expanded participation in the labour market, with particular emphasis on women and children. Canada and France also noted the importance of a particular focus on women and girls. Finland and France both highlighted disability as a key focus issue. Ecuador highlighted the importance of re-affirming commitments under the 1951 convention and in the New York Declaration, (which has strong commitments to women and girls) and in particular the strong rights language in both documents.

Several other States strongly emphasised the importance of refugee participation however made no mention of issues of age, gender or diversity. They included Ethiopia, the European Union and Switzerland, who noted the importance of all stakeholders being involved in decision-making, including refugees. The statements from the Global Refugee-Led Network (GRN) and the Global Youth Advisory Council (GYAC) stressed the particular needs of women and girls and the importance of an AGD approach. The GRN Statement also made reference to the particular protection needs of LGBTIQ refugees and those with a disability. ICVA and the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) also made statements on behalf of their NGO and civil society members. Both included a focus on refugee women and girls as part of the age, gender and diversity approach. The ICVA Statement also made particular mention of the Five Commitments to Refugee women and girls, disability and youth. In their closing remarks, Perveen Ali, Daniel Endres and Volker Turk all emphasised that age, gender and diversity is a cross-cutting issue which must be reflected across all themes and co-sponsorship areas.

LUNCH TIME SIDE MEETING ON REFUGEE PARTICIPATION Tuesday 25 June 2019 1.30-3.00pm

With Refugees: Inclusive Implementation of the GCR

Chair: Mohammed Badran**,** Representative, Global Refugee-led Network

Panellists: Oanel Zeneke Kebede Korcho, Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the UN office at Geneva**,** Nathalie Olijaslager, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN office at Geneva, Daniel Endres, Director, GRF, Annemieke Tsike-Sossah, Refugee Liaison, IKEA Foundation, Foni Joyce, Refugee representative, Global Youth Advisory Council.

> ***'If we don't let refugees define themselves, they will be defined by others.'***
> (Representative, Netherlands Government drawing on Michelle Obama)

This was a very strong session on the importance of refugee participation from the local level through to decision making at the very highest levels. This included participation in education, livelihoods programs, access to health care services, and to advocacy opportunities at a local, national and an International level. It included active participation in all decision making and planning meetings. A key point made by several speakers was that participation must be real, not tokenistic, and to achieve this, refugees will need support and resources.

There was a strong focus on using an AGD Framework, but as so frequently occurs, there was no discussion of what it would actually mean in practice, Apart from one very strong presentation from Foni Joyce a refugee representative, comments by Daniel Endres, UNHCR to questions from the floor, the other speakers presentation were completely silent on gender issues. As a result the specific but often very different

experiences and barriers to meaningful participation of refugee women and girls, men and boys was neither analysed nor acknowledged.

The key issues raised were:

The Government representative from Ethiopia noted good practice and successes achieved in Ethiopia including the imperatives of an inclusive approach in hosting refugees. This included ensuring better protection, peaceful coexistence of refugee and host communities, and a narrative of refugees as a contributing population. Initiatives mentioned included registration of births, deaths and marriages, equal access to health, education and the labour market. This involved a multi-partner approach, including with the World Bank and other key stakeholders. While implicit in these excellent practices, gender, women and girls were not mentioned.

Foni Joyce, GYC/Refugee representative stated that from the experience of her organisation and many other refugee groups, meaningful participation and partnerships must consider age and gender and people with disabilities. This must involve meaningful engagement, and not "just tick the box".

> *Young people appreciate opportunities. Opportunities enable maximum growth. We want to take a lead. We don't just want a seat at the table, we want to take action. We want to implement the solutions. For this to happen we need internships, partnerships and job training*.

The importance of girls not just having primary education but being able to access secondary and tertiary education was discussed as critically important for girls' participation. In response to a question from the Gender Audit team, Daniel Enders stated that:

> *Education is the most important issue, as refugees are the most left behind group in the world and in particular in secondary school which is where most 'fall off the cliff, particularly girls.'*

He concluded by saying that UNHCR has taken a new approach to more actively include refugees. However he noted that to do this well does not come without challenges and requires honest reflection on ways in which this can be done better. All participants and interventions were silent on the importance of gender disaggregated data as a tool to ensure that an AGD framework is implemented.

Agenda Item Two Tuesday 25 June 2019 3.00pm – 6pm

Structure for the Global Refugee Forum

The focus of this session was on the structure of the Global Forum on Refugees. Ms Perveen Ali, UNHCR Global Refugee Forum Coordination Team and Mr Daniel Endres, GRF Director discussed the importance of the Digital Platform, and the opportunities to showcase Good Practice. They noted that there would be side events and a Market Place on December 16 but not during the Global Forum on Refugees. It was disappointing to see the very strong gender commitments in the Global Compact on Refugees was not mentioned in this session. Key priorities mentioned by Member States for inclusion in the Forum were: education, (raised by several states), employment and labour mobility, the importance of ensuring effective and representative refugee participation, protection issues, green energy, a focus on solutions and engaging a wider support base.

NGO priorities were very similar. In a joint statement the Global Refugee- led Network and the Global Youth Advisory Council requested genuine participation for refugee representatives and recommended that:

1. Refugee experts to be part of the GRF planning team
2. Members states include refugees as part of their delegations
3. Each panel should include refugee rep with relevant expertise.
4. There be interactive exhibitions for all themes
5. The Forum should be streamed on -line through GRF website
6. There be a high-level panel on meaningful refugee participation.

They offered to take a key role in achieving these goals through participation in relevant meetings, but noted that to do this, financial and logistical support would be needed. ICVA made a statement which argued strongly for the inclusion of an AGD framework across all sessions.

Sadly, neither UNHCR, members states, nor the refugee networks made mention of AGD, women and girls or SGBV. These are issues which deserve specific attention in their own right and should also crosscut each of the other issues. The assumption that they will be included does not guarantee that this will happen. In this session, the issue of refugee participation while raised several times, including in the introduction from Daniel Endres, by three members states and in the three NGO and refugee network statements there were no explicit mentions of the importance of supporting the participation and equal representation by refugee women.. Unfortunately, again, with the exception of the ICVA statement none included the application of an AGD approach and importance of ensuring that women and girls were equally represented with men and boys.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE JUNE UNHCR PROTECTION 75th STANDING COMMITTEE 18 – 21 June 2019

> *GCR critical……Continue priority on refugee women at risk and victims of SBGV* (South Korea)

Ensuring protection for vulnerable refugees requires that they are protected from sexual abuse (UK)

A member of the Gender Audit Team also attended the June Standing committee. It was noted that there was a strong emphasis by UNHCR on the importance of an Age, Gender and Diversity Framework, and from several members states on addressing the specific needs of refugee women and girls in particular addressing sexual and gender based violence in all discussion of the GCR and the GRF. UNHCR Presenters, many interventions from Members States, UN agencies and NGO Representatives all spoke strongly of the importance of the GCR in addressing these issues

> *Young people, women, people with a disability's needs were outlined in the GCR – and we do hope that the GCR will provide solutions for the 20 million refugees* (Morocco)

It was somewhat disappointing to see that this high level of commitment was not always reflected in the statements made at the second Preparatory meeting. It was also interesting to note that there were no refugee voices, nor observers at the Standing committee. However, it is recognised that a refugee woman speaker from Uganda was to have been included in the lunchtime side event on Livelihoods but did not receive her travel documents in time to travel to Geneva.

Annex 1
Informal Discussion & Round table Meeting held at the Australian Mission, Geneva Summary Report

Informal Discussion June 20th 2019

Host – Catherine Gill, Counsellor (Humanitarian)

Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations Geneva

As a contribution to strengthening gender input into the process of planning for the Global Refugee Forum, the Australian Mission hosted an Informal discussion and a Round Table Meeting on Gender. The first Informal discussion was held on 20th June before the preparatory Meeting, and the second roundtable on 3rd July two weeks later.

The first meeting was attended by four members 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 States present all commented on the value of the concept paper in highlighting gender as a cross-cutting issue. Following a very fruitful discussion of gender and SGBV the outcomes of the meeting were:

It was agreed to consider an informal "Friends of Gender Group" or other format to ensure a strong focus on Gender issues across the pledges. It was suggested that this group might work to ensure that at least one State with a strong focus on Gender issues was part of each of the 6 co-sponsorship groups and could work to ensure that women, girls and gender equality issues are visible.

Confirmation that the Australian Mission would host a Roundtable on Gender following the 2nd Preparatory meeting on the 3rd July.

Roundtable Meeting, 3rd July 2019

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.

Host – Catherine Gill, Counsellor (Humanitarian)

Attendees: A range of States, UNHCR, NGO and refugee representatives.

The three refugee representatives, Apajok Biar, Shaza Al Rihawi and Hafsar Tameesuddin presented very powerfully.

Key points raised by Apajok were that the six co-sponsorship themes are all interlinked and relate to solutions. She noted that more resettlement places are needed, and women affected by SGBV need to by prioritised. She argued that we must look to good practice examples and move away

from tokenism. National systems are needed for inclusive engagement and these must include CBOs, who are often not considered as important elements of responsibility-sharing.

Hafsar noted that protection issues are acute in terms of detention of women and children. Short-term support is urgently needed for refugee women affected by SGBV, in particular when family violence forces them to return to violent situations. Access to services generally is difficult for women and girls, and the importance of participation and healthcare for women and girls is key.

Shaza argued that schooling for girl children is a major tool for protection. This needs to be accessible, provided in communities, with local teachers. Hygiene products have to be available to girls to enable them to attend school when menstruating and provisions must be made for disabled students. She noted that access to job market and decent work for females have a large impact on protection and ability to participate. Data collection must consider women's informal work, including agricultural work which is not considered in statistics. Access to decent work and sustainable jobs in host communities are difficult to find. At times refugee women are in competition with women from the host community for the same jobs. She requested that service providers consult with refugees to engage them in solutions.

Catherine Gill thanked the presenters. She stated that the GRF is an opportunity to address these challenges, including the key issues of statelessness. She observed that lessons from what has been raised included working with host countries and supporting access to services, meaningful participation, collecting disaggregated and meaningful statistics, and exploring how we can support the potential of refugee communities' potential. *"Your three contributions today show what can be unleashed".*

UNWomen responded that we must translate words into action. The key messages which she had heard and would commit to were:

Addressing SGBV, empowerment of women and girls, and recognising and enabling their agency and the contributions which they bring to the table. Three specific commitments were made:

1. Co-sponsor protection capacity and support all co-sponsors in gender mainstreaming across all groups. They committed 30% of one their gender specialists' time to assist with this.
2. A Focus on a 'second chance' at education for adult women
3. They will prepare general aide-memoire to assist each co-sponsor

The Women's Refugee Commission is co-sponsoring protection capacity and jobs/livelihoods with sub-themes of gender and youth. They are also preparing a 2-page Tip-sheet on AGD with Plan and UNSW on incorporating an AGD Framework across the Sponsorship groups and Pledges. It will be simple and will present 5 things to think about. It will be completed by the end of July and sign-on will be sought from across the sector. On behalf of the Gender Team, Linda Bartolomei committed that she and Eileen Pittway would have six concept notes on issues and potential gender related pledges ready for the Co-sponsorship meetings the following week. (refer to the Gender audit meeting report for the hotlinks). A tool has been developed which enables scrutiny of acknowledgements of cross cutting issues. e.g. if a mention of youth, is it gendered; if disability, does it contain LGBTIQ. A short document has also been prepared examining the crosscuts for women and girls, gender and diversity; (See Annex 2 of the Gender Audit Report of the 2nd Preparatory meeting).

Catherine Gill noted that the Gender Audit team had already shared their preliminary work on potential pledges, and another State representative noted that some of these specific pledges could be gender transformative. One member state participant reflected that it had helped them think about the gendered dimensions of energy, and would help shape the representative's advice to their capital.

One NGO representative stated that:

I wish we could move away from SGBV discussion but we're facing systematic failure. Host community governments must commit to acting on SGBV regardless of the status of the victim. Awareness-raising is good but needs to link to something concrete.

One UNHCR representative indicated that she was inspired by concrete level of pledges from the group and noted that the commitment of technical support from UNWomen very pleasing. She emphasised that we have much ground to cover still and asked that we be a bit radical and use this opportunity to contribute to a transformative agenda.:

Our response has to be married with prevention, solid concrete gender equality work and we cannot role back work on SGBV.

The meeting concluded with a call to reconvene the Gender Roundtable after the co-sponsorship meetings to debrief on gender content in meetings.

Annex 2

Snapshot of mentions relevant to women and girls, gender, diversity and refugee participation across the meetings linked to pledges and potential pledges in co- sponsorship areas. The meetings included the two Round Table meetings convened by the Australian Mission, and all sessions and side meetings at The June Preparatory meeting.

As can be seen below, in the mention of key words and concepts which are core to the Age Gender and Diversity Policy and which must be reflected in Pledges in order to implement the gender commitments in the Global Compact on Refugees, at the time of the June meeting there was very little specific mention or discussion of these in the sessions planning the Global Refugee Forum and the importance of the Co-Sponsorship groups in fulfilling the promise of the GCR.

It is important to note that several member states consistently wove AGD, women and girls throughout their interventions and promises, with others showing a strong commitment. However, the major input on these issues came from the civil society participants, with refugee participants taking a lead role. This indicates the importance that refugees and services providers in the field place on addressing, gender inequality, the specific needs of diverse and vulnerable groups and SGBV as part of potential solutions to the refugee crises. This comes directly from their lived experience and their experience of addressing the problems at the ground level.

Education

Stakeholders who mentioned these:	Women and girls named	SGBV named	AGD named	Refugee Participation named	Youth named	Disability named	LGBTI named	The elderly named
States	2		2	1		2 (& gender)		
NGOs	4		2	4		2 (1 no gender)	2	
UN Agencies and others				2				

Protection Capacity

Stakeholders who mentioned these:	Women and girls named	SGBV named	AGD named	Refugee Participation named	Youth named	Disability named	LGBTI named	The elderly named
States	1	1	1			2 (1 gender silent)		
NGOs	5	3	3			2 (gender silent)		
UN Agencies and others								

NB Gender silent denotes that the issue was raised but with no gender analysis or distinction made between women and men, boys or girls.

Responsibility and Burden Sharing

Stakeholders who mentioned these:	Women and girls named	SGBV named	AGD named	Refugee Participation named	Youth named	Disability named	LGBTI named	The elderly named
States	2	1	2	2 (gendered) 1 (gender silent)		1		
NGOs	3	2	1		2 (gendered) 1 (gender silent)	2 (gendered) 1 (gender silent)	1	
UN Agencies and others								

Jobs and Livelihoods

Stakeholders who mentioned these:	Women and girls named	SGBV named	AGD named	Refugee Participation named	Youth named	Disability named	LGBTI named	The elderly named
States	2		1					
NGOs	4	1	2		1 (gender silent) 1 (gendered)	1 (gender silent)	1	
UN Agencies and others			1 (children)	1 (gender silent)	1 (gender silent)			

Energy and Infrastructure

Stakeholders who mentioned these:	Women and girls named	SGBV named	AGD named	Refugee Participation named	Youth named	Disability named	LGBTI named	The elderly named
States	2	1	1	1 (gender silent)		1		
NGOs	2	2	1	2		1	2	1 (women)
UN Agencies and others			1 (child)		1 (gender silent)			

Solutions

Stakeholders who mentioned these:	Women and girls named	SGBV named	AGD named	Refugee Participation named	Youth named	Disability named	LGBTI named	The elderly named
States	1	1	1					
NGOs	2			2	1(gender silent)	1	2	
UN Agencies and others								

Annex 3

Gender mention at the UNHCR Protection Standing Committee June 2019

During the Standing Committee meeting the importance of addressing SGBV was raised a total of 18 times across the meeting. There were seven references by UNHCR, nine from Members States and two from NGOs. Specific references to the particular needs of refugee women and girls were also made by UNHCR, NGOs and several member states. Each of these specific mentions are listed below.

Specific mentions of SGBV

UNHCR

We are best guided by what refugees want. As is clearly set out by the AGD approach – engaging refugees is central to that approach ……Also, in how we address SGBV community involvement is key. I particularly want to highlight Safe from the Start. …….. it is crucial that this orientation towards individuals and communities must continue to guide us (Volker Turk, UNHCR)

We know that the Convention flexible enough to provide protection on SGBV, LGBTI, Gang violence- these advances have been hard one. We need to seek to redress through hands on and concrete involvement of people of concern – deliver concrete quality services e.g. SGBV, those with specific needs disability, children, older people. (Volker Turk, UNHCR)

Need for a much more robust response to SGBV and mental health- resonates very loudly with UNHCR (Grainne O'Hara, UNHCR)

Promotion of Gender Equality – SGBV – what does success look like – when people feel confident to report cases. No use saying that abuse does not occur- zero tolerance (Andrew Harper UNHCR)

Strong focus on Sexual Exploitation and abuse and disciplinary responses (Kelly Clements, Deputy HC UNHCR)

Member States

SGBV is key and we welcome the work to continue to prioritise this. We are pleased with strengthening of AGD and that will continue to implement and in accountability frameworks of partners (Sweden)

Concerned about SGBV – while women are disproportionately affected – it is important to acknowledge that men and boys are also victims (Norway)

Ensuring protection for vulnerable refugees requires that they are protected from sexual abuse. Would welcome and update on what UNHCR is doing on this (UK)

GCR critical……Continue priority on refugee women at risk and victims of SBGV (Korea)

Addressing SGBV is critical (USA) – mentioned twice across the meeting

To improve access to psychosocial and legal access for SGBV survivors – inclusive women and girls and also men and boys….. SGBV increases in conflict – pleased to be funding responses in Bangladesh and would like regular updates from UNHCR on SGBV (Australia)

Commends UNHCR's work to combat sexual abuse and exploitation (Netherlands)

What was the impact of the roving SGBV advisor deployed to 10 countries? (Belgium)

NGOS

*Some of the most vulnerable groups include: - **Women** under threat of SGBV, exploitation, trafficking, social isolation, with difficult access to services, often leading to negative coping strategies. - **Boys and girls** exposed to risks including human trafficking and child labour. Prolonged deprivation and elevated stress levels put them at risk of inadequate cognitive, social and emotional development, negatively impacting their learning abilities* (ICVA).

Specific mention of Women and Girls

UNHCR

I did not mention the Gender discrimination and impacts on women in my remarks, but it {Statelessness} does indeed impact women and children (Carole Batchelor, UNHCR)

*Global Strategic priorities includes Gender Equality (*Andrew Harper, UNHCR)

Member States

We are talking about families, women and girls and little children – but numbers are growing (Ecuador)

Young people, women, people with a Disability needs were outlined in the GCR – and we do hope that the GCR will provide solutions for the 20 million refugees (Morocco)

Again, strong support for the GCR and its possible impacts. ……Girls, boys and women – vulnerability focus important (France)

encourage UNHCR to strengthen its information collection with quality of disaggregated of data (Australia)

Look forward to the Nigeria study on the extent to which women and girls were involved (Canada)

Specific focus on women and statelessness – gender discrimination (USA)

Participation of women in management structures (USA)

Promotion of gender equality and involvement of persons of concerns (Netherlands)

Targeted support to women and girls welcomed…{need }Specific indicators of female leadership and gender equality (Germany)

Commend work on Gender equality (Canada)

NGOs

Discriminatory policies and practices and the lack of safeguards in national laws are further causes of statelessness. Today, 25 countries deny women equal rights in conferring nationality to their children, while some 50 countries deny women equal rights in their ability to acquire, change or retain their nationality, or to confer nationality on non-national spouses (ICVA)

***Having refugees and host communities co-sponsor a specific theme should also be pursued**, particularly in the case of women and girls* (ICVA).