

**CALL TO ACTION** on Protection  
from Gender-Based  
Violence in Emergencies

**2019 Annual Global Partners Meeting**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

**November 5 – 7, 2019**

# **CALL TO ACTION** on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies

The 2019 annual global partners meeting of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies (Call to Action) took place on November 5 to 7 in Geneva. The meeting was hosted by the Government of Canada, the current global Lead of the Call to Action. There were over 80 representatives of the global partners, together with local CSO colleagues from the Philippines, Lebanon and the pilot Road Map countries of Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The meeting was held at a time when partners are considering their action plans for 2020 and preparing to develop a post-2020 Road Map that will guide the work of the partnership for the next five years. These two priorities were reflected in the objectives for the meeting:

- Review near-term opportunities and challenges that should be addressed in the 2020 action plans of the collective.
- Identify issues to address in an updated Road Map and confirm the process for drafting and finalizing the document.

The meeting also provided a great forum for sharing new resources developed by Call to Action partners. A high-level event hosted by Canada on the evening of November 5 called attention to the importance of understanding and operating effectively in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

The meeting agenda and accompanying concept note, together with the PowerPoint presentations for each session, are posted on the partners section of the Call to Action website. A summary of the outcomes from the high-level event is posted on the news page of the Call to Action website.

## **Sessions Highlights/Day One**

The meeting was opened by Her Excellency Leslie Norton, Canada's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva. The Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) then reviewed the findings from several sources that informed the design of the annual meeting—the 2018 Call to Action Progress Report and accompanying internal memo, the Road Map Survey, and an analysis of current commitments. These documents were shared with partners before the meeting and are available on the Call to Action website.

To further set the stage for the meeting, there was a thought-provoking presentation on the learning from the *What Works to Prevent Violence* initiative. Over five years, the initiative has produced evidence on prevalence, patterns and drivers of violence against women and girls and effective approaches to prevent it.

The remainder of the morning was devoted to an in-depth discussion of three thematic areas that require further consideration in the next Road Map. Key point raised by partners include:

### ***Gender Equality***

- More clearly articulate the linkages between gender inequality and GBV in the framing of the Call to Action Road Map, as well as how addressing GBV contributes to gender equality. Ensure a common understanding among partners of the linkages and approach. Gender equality is still seen as something apart from humanitarian response.
- It will be important to strengthen gender equality actions without diluting the focus on GBV.

# **CALL TO ACTION** on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies

- Partners should also consider the issue in the context of the nexus, while still maintaining the GBV in Emergencies focus of the Call to Action.
- Consider adding specific gender equality indicators.

## **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**

- The pros and cons of addressing PSEA in the next Road Map need to be further unpacked and the process for decision-making on whether/how to include in the Road Map shared with partners.
- Capture learning from the success of PSEA becoming an organizational commitment in order to secure that same commitment to GBV.
- Partners should also take care that their advocacy does not lose sight of PSEA and its relationship to GBV.
- There is value to Call to Action providing advice and guidance to agencies on a survivor-centered approach and reinforcing CSO efforts.
- It's important to advocate for increasing the number of female staff in humanitarian organizations.

## **Intersectionality**

- Help move this body of work forward in the next Road Map. Integrate an intersectional approach throughout the document.
- Describe the work in language that is understandable—perhaps focus less on specific usage of the word and more on the work.
- Reflect an intersectional approach in data collection processes.
- Identify examples of good practice. Certain organizations could take the lead in identifying components for the Road Map and/or sample commitments.

## **Strengthening CSO Engagement and Field-level Awareness and Implementation of Call to Action**

The afternoon session focused on efforts to strengthen CSO engagement in GBV work and the Call to Action, and several initiatives to advance the objectives of Call to Action in the field. In addition to reviewing findings from the GBV AoR's Localization Task Team, the session also covered the Call to Action Road Map pilot projects in Northeast Nigeria and the DRC, ECHO-sponsored awareness raising workshops with humanitarian workers in 10 countries, and updates on the GBV Accountability Framework piloted in South Sudan and Northern Iraq. The Framework details the priority actions humanitarian actors, particularly leadership, must take in any emergency to address GBV. It is now integrated into the Call to Action and will be a great resource for improving field implementation of Call to Action, developing the next Road Map and improving the quality of partners' commitments.

Breakout groups looked at how to leverage the learning from these different initiatives to strengthen near term activities and improve the Road Map. Among the recommendations:

- Promote ownership and support institutionalization of the Accountability Framework under the umbrella of Call to Action.
- Identify ways to follow up on ECHO-sponsored workshops, particularly in countries that developed action plans.
- For CSOs—and indeed all stakeholders—clarify and streamline linkages between Call to Action and other complementary structures and commitments.
- Consider what Call to Action as a collective can offer to local actors—for example in the areas of advocacy opportunities, networking, funding streams, and learning.

# **CALL TO ACTION** on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies

- In an updated Road Map, consider specific actions related to support for and partnership with CSOs, particularly women-focused and women-led CSOs. Engage CSOs in the Road Map updating process.

Note: The WRC will draw on the full output from the breakout groups to draft a Call to Action Field Implementation Strategy for partner review. A toolkit on developing field-level Road Maps will also be shared with the partnership this year.

## **Session Highlights/Day Two**

Partners received a second briefing on recently developed tools and guidance that are relevant for 2020 activities and an updated Road Map. The remainder of the day was devoted to governance and accountability issues, and to a review of needed updates to the Road Map by Outcome.

### **New Tools and Guidance**

Presentations covered the new Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies Programming, the updated GBV Coordination Handbook, a Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) Toolkit, the Managing GBV in Emergencies Learning Program and a new Health Sector Protocol on Clinical Management of Rape and Intimate Partner Violence Survivors. Additional details on the GBV Accountability Framework were also shared in this session. Again, copies of all these presentations can be found on the partners' section of the Call to Action website.

### **Governance and Accountability**

In the first four years of the Call to Action, there has been marked progress on strengthening governance and accountability, but also a number of ongoing challenges that must be addressed for the initiative to realize its potential. These are captured in the 2017 and 2018 Call to Action Progress Reports, the WRC's paper on partners' commitments and the Road Map Survey. Recommendations from breakout groups on increasing current partner engagement, recruiting new partners and strengthening the governance component of the Road Map include the following:

#### ***Increasing Engagement of Current Partners***

- Secure stronger internal senior leadership buy-in. We need to convey the strategic value of participating in Call to Action. A high-level champion is essential.
- Ensure partner commitments are understood at all levels of the organization and that new leadership/staff are briefed on their organization's engagement in Call to Action.
- Don't name and shame. Undertake targeted outreach to unengaged partners. Put a formal process in place for dealing with partners that don't report or participate.
- Keep the reporting process as streamlined as possible. Is it necessary to report on each commitment annually? Could partners be asked to report on one outcome in a given year?
- Look at linking more effectively with other platforms that partners are engaged in e.g. Grand Bargain or Women, Peace and Security work.
- Consider making all commitments public.

#### ***New Partners and Commitments***

- It should be about quality not quantity.
- Institute a Call to Action onboarding process for new members and/or focal points.

# **CALL TO ACTION** on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies

- It is beneficial to have more non-Western governments, especially those from conflict-affected areas. There are risks to engaging with certain States that are parties to a conflict. It is important to maintain the integrity of Call to Action, but also have a chance to influence behavior, which is easier when actors are at the table. A mitigation measure is to require all partners to publicly endorse a set of key principles, including gender equality, in order to join.
- What can we do to encourage Foundations to join and where would they sit vis-à-vis our stakeholder groups?
- What about targeting related networks and coalitions (e.g. Girls Not Brides)? Should also look at targeting women-focused CSOs, survivor-led groups and youth groups including young feminist groups.
- As more CSOs become partners, we will also need to look at a more localized or perhaps regional component to governance structure.

## **Changes to Governance Structure**

- We should keep in mind that Call to Action was started to hold those with power accountable, and we don't want to lose sight of that.
- One possibility is to have IOs and NGOs influence the work plan for the States Group or validate it.
- Note the points above about unpacking the value to CSOs of being in the Call to Action and adjusting the structure if/as needed.
- Despite collective interest in having more cross-stakeholder group collaboration, that has not really happened. We should select one or two areas to focus on together in 2020—e.g. the funding issue and an activity.
- What about creating cross-working groups for each Road Map outcome?
- One group recommended creating a rotating Accountability Committee comprised of representatives from each stakeholder group to review the proposed commitments of new partners and evaluate progress against commitments by existing partners.

## **Updating the Road Map**

Partners have agreed to develop an updated five-year Road Map that will be ready for public release by the Fall of 2020. There was not a consensus recommendation at this meeting to develop any new outcomes. In general, partners seem on board with the substance of the current outcomes. There is a strong desire to see the next Road Map written in language accessible to multiple audiences. And, as noted below, there are recommendations from breakout groups to make changes in Action Areas.

## **Outcome 1**

- The current Road Map does not include a Theory of Change. Should consider that for the next Road Map.
- Consider adding language about having minimum standards in place.
- There are gaps related to the accountability framework of the humanitarian system itself (e.g. the Centrality of Protection Strategy).
- Decide whether/how PSEA is woven into Action Areas(s).
- Understand how intersectionality fits in and is defined.
- Indicators around gender equality and GBV need to be clearer to ensure lines are not blurred.
- The Outcome refers to humanitarian actors. Is that too narrow? Advocacy organizations, for example, are not necessarily humanitarian actors. Who are the stakeholders one wants to capture under this Outcome?

# **CALL TO ACTION** on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies

## **Outcome 2**

- Coordination should refer to non-cluster situations too. The language in general needs to be adjusted as things have changed in the last 5 years.
- In general, the language is too generic. The Accountability Framework could be helpful here. And need to make linkages to impact.
- Accountability could be strengthened by making the asks more explicit and by stakeholder type.
- Where do we go next in terms of accountability and performance measures for leadership—Humanitarian Coordinators, Country Directors, other senior leaders.
- Changes are needed to the indicators. Regarding fifty percent co-coordination with local actors, it is not clear if that's government or CSOs.
- Need to take intersectionality into account in these Action Areas too.

## **Outcome 3**

- The group felt it was important to have fewer, more visionary Action Areas, while acknowledging they also identified a number of potential new Actions.
- Recommend including language around preparedness and the nexus in Action Areas. Spell out risk mitigation. Would like to see PSEA integrated.
- Focus is very much on assessments and the data component, but linkages to programming are needed. And would recommend stronger emphasis on monitoring.
- Pull out disaggregation of sex, age, and disability data as it's now buried.
- Add language on women-focused and women-led organisations as well as on intersectionality.
- Address the gender equality and GBV programming issue.
- Note the importance of collecting information ethically and safely.

## **Outcome 4**

- This is a large and ambitious outcome, so need specificity in Key Actions.
- Some concern that this outcome is under internal institutional pathways, which doesn't give us the opportunity to think about collective advocacy.
- Consider advocacy as a Key Action Area.
- Regarding language, instead of "available" funding, use language like dedicated, allocated, or accessible funding.
- Need Key Action Areas around political will and core funding for local actors.
- Separate out pooled funding into its own Key Action.
- Need to unpack the tracking issues to develop the most effective Action(s) on this issue.

## **Outcome 5**

- State in the updated Road Map that a Key Action under this outcome—the development of the Minimum Standards—has been accomplished. And then need to revise the Action Areas accordingly.
- Take the nexus into consideration.
- On Action Area 5.3 related to technical capacity: change the language to "mobilise local, national, regional and when/if needed, international capacity."
- Important to address the issues within the Call to Action around targeted gender equality and GBV programming under this outcome too.

# CALL TO ACTION on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies

- There are key players that don't necessarily identify as humanitarian actors, but play an important role.
- Suggest linking Outcomes 3 and 5 with Outcome 6.

## Outcome 6

- Found it to be the most confusing of the outcomes.
- The intention of the outcome is unclear. Is it related to management, to risk mitigation, to both?
- The Key Action Areas don't really match the outcome.
- Some consensus in the group on focusing on risk mitigation, as that is not strongly addressed elsewhere.
- Gender equality is in the outcome but not any of the Action Areas. Need to be new Action Area(s) on that.

## Session Highlights/Day Three

The final day of the meeting opened with a session on collective action—a hallmark of the added value of the Call to Action initiative. This was followed by stakeholder working group meetings to begin their 2020 planning, and a closing session that outlined next steps in the process for updating the Road Map.

### Collective Action

The plenary began with a presentation on the topline findings and recommendations from the *Where is the Money* report and *Localised, Women-led GBV Response: Funding Trends and Data Review*. There was also a detailed discussion of how, under the Call to Action umbrella, partners can maximize opportunities like the Oslo Conference to advance the three objectives of the Call to Action. The Oslo conference was the first time that Call to Action produced a collective advocacy statement and there will be similar opportunities over the next year, beginning with the Global Refugee Forum in December. There are also openings to be seized in recurring processes such as the development of Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Humanitarian Response Plans.

To strengthen collective action, breakout groups were asked to identify areas where the Call to Action needs to develop or strengthen its messages. Suggestions include:

- Clear articulation of the principles that undergird the Call to Action. One group raised the possibility of having a communique of core principles that could accompany the launch of the next Road Map.
- Strong messages on funding and tracking that are targeted to leadership and promoted at high-level meetings.
- Improved messaging on the importance of promoting gender equality and on the links between gender inequality and GBV.
- Shared messaging on sexual violence against men and boys that is based on agreed-upon inter-agency standards and guidance (e.g. the IASC GBV Guidelines and the Minimum Standards).
- Developing a common approach on local engagement under the Call to Action, including how to better support women-focused CSOs and ensure long-term core funding.
- Advancing understanding throughout the humanitarian community that GBV is everyone's responsibility.

# **CALL TO ACTION** on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies

## **Stakeholder Working Group Meetings**

The Working Groups will continue discussions begun at the annual meeting to develop their respective work plans. While much work remains to be done, here are some initial considerations shared by each group:

### **International Organizations Working Group**

- Continue the internal push to build momentum within our own agencies and ensure the 2020 work plan reflects this priority.
- Identify ways for greater engagement with processes like the Global Refugee Forum and to advocate for Call to Action priorities in other coordination mechanisms in which partners participate.
- Share PSEA guidance note across the Call to Action collective for endorsement.
- To strengthen accountability for action within the group, look at setting up small working groups to take on a given activity.

### **NGO Working Group**

- Interested in circulating a messaging toolkit on the Call to Action website for internal advocacy purposes and for new members when they come on board.
- Want to take action to support local leadership and put them at the center of the work we do.
- Ensure NGO priorities are well-reflected in next Road Map.
- Would like to do more work across working groups and have more information on the activities of the groups.

### **States and Donors Group**

- Will be important to ensure commitments under the updated Road Map help us reach the goals.
- Contribute to a successful roll-out of the GBV Accountability Framework.
- Consider how the group can strategically influence key events, including meetings of the Executive Boards of the UN agencies.
- Also want to work more across groups and provide feedback to the groups.

### **Timeline for Updating the Road Map**

As currently envisaged, the goal is to have a final draft of the Road Map completed by the June 2020 partners meeting. With that in mind, WRC proposed this timeline:

- First full draft shared by February 7
- Partners feedback due by February 28
- WRC integrates feedback and develops indicators during March
- Second draft shared with partners on March 31 for redline comments on text and initial feedback on indicators
- Partners submit feedback by April 17
- Final draft shared in early May for organizational clearance by June partners meeting

Note: A good suggestion was made to provide partners with an outline of the proposed Road Map before a full draft is developed. The time frame for reviewing an outline will be shared shortly.

### **Closing**

Kara Mitchell, Deputy Director of Humanitarian Policy and Global Engagement, Global Affairs Canada, closed the meeting by thanking every partner for their good work over the past three days and their



# **CALL TO ACTION** on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies

commitment to the success of the Call to Action. She urged all partners to stay true to our collective commitment and remain focused on common priorities as we continue to push for transformative change in 2020 and beyond.