

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

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**Strengthening Field Implementation**  
A Strategy for Call to Action Partners

September 2020

# Raising Awareness and Strengthening Implementation of the Call to Action in the Field

## A Strategy for Call to Action Partners

### Rationale

The Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (Call to Action) is a global initiative that will ultimately be judged by the impact it has on the safety and well-being of those most at risk of gender-based violence in emergencies. It requires the commitment and engagement of humanitarian actors *at all levels*. Implementing the Call to Action with partners' field leadership and staff and with local actors is essential to sustainability and success.

Partners recognize that raising awareness and strengthening implementation in the field is a gap that must be better addressed as the Call to Action initiative matures. In a number of settings, field-based colleagues, including senior management, are not yet familiar with the Call to Action or that their own institution is a member. If colleagues are not aware of the initiative, they miss critical opportunities to advocate and act together, and to bring important national and local partners on board.

### Seizing the Moment

Now is the time for the Call to Action partnership to adopt a field implementation strategy. The launch of the 2021-2025 Road Map provides an invaluable opportunity to strengthen awareness of the Call to Action within partner organizations and across humanitarian response operations. The added emphasis on partnership with local organizations,<sup>1</sup> particularly women's organizations,<sup>2</sup> in the updated Road Map should lead to stronger commitments to field-level action.

Partners can also draw on the learning from several promising efforts undertaken over the last several years to promote the Call to Action in the field. These include Call to Action Road Map pilot projects in Northeast Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo<sup>3</sup> and the 10 European Union (through DG-ECHO)-organized Call to Action awareness-raising workshops held in 2018 across several regions.<sup>4</sup>

Integration of the GBV Accountability Framework into the Call to Action is another important development.<sup>5</sup> The Framework was successfully piloted in South Sudan and Northern Iraq in 2018. It is an excellent practical resource for strengthening field implementation, and an important guide for partners as they develop their commitments under the updated Road Map.

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<sup>1</sup> Local organizations would include national non-governmental organizations, faith-based associations, community-based organizations, local community groups, and youth groups etc.

<sup>2</sup> Women's organizations include national, regional, and local civil society entities, including women-led and women-focused organizations, women's rights organizations, girls' groups, and feminist movements.

<sup>3</sup> The Northeast Nigeria pilot ran from 2017–2019; the DRC pilot from 2018–2020. See project descriptions here: <https://www.calltoactiongbv.com/call-to-action-in-the-field>.

<sup>4</sup> The workshops were held in Afghanistan, Colombia, Kenya, Cameroun, Iraq, Jordan, Sudan, Thailand, Turkey, and Senegal: [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/field\\_workshops\\_c2a\\_echo\\_2018\\_overview.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/field_workshops_c2a_echo_2018_overview.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> The GBV Accountability Framework articulates the actions field-level donors and humanitarian actors, particularly leadership, must take to prioritize GBV prevention and response. Call to Action partners who helped develop and pilot implementation include CARE, DFID, IOM, IRC, NRC, OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, and OFDA.

Lastly, Call to Action partners have new entry points in the humanitarian system that must be leveraged to ensure accountability and quality programming. For example, the Centrality of Protection and GBV are now considered essential components of Humanitarian Country Team Compacts. Gender equality and GBV programming are priority concerns in Humanitarian Coordinators' Terms of Reference. Increased attention to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus also provides opportunities to strengthen work on GBV prevention and gender equality.

## **Target Audience**

The primary audience (users) for the strategy are the focal points for the Call to Action's global partners and the global-level Stakeholder Working Groups. This is the initiative's first field implementation strategy. Initially, it will take committed champions at the global level to secure leadership buy-in and to provide field colleagues with the information, resources, and other support they may need to get traction on the Call to Action in their settings. As progress is made in multiple settings, Call to Action's field strategy should transition to partnership activities championed and led by field-based colleagues.

## **Approach and Objectives**

The strategy is centered on the unique value of the Call to Action and the added support it brings as a multi-stakeholder partnership to advocacy and programming efforts. It draws from discussions at partner meetings, reflections from the EU-organized workshops, and learning from the piloting of the field-level Road Maps and the GBV Accountability Framework. The strategy outlines actions that global Call to Action partners can take individually and collectively to strengthen field engagement and implementation of Call to Action across humanitarian settings.

The three objectives of this initial strategy are:

- Strengthen awareness and uptake of the Call to Action and its GBV Accountability Framework within partner organizations.
- Undertake collective activities under the Call to Action umbrella to raise awareness and strengthen implementation at country and regional levels, including through utilization of the GBV Accountability Framework.
- Expand and deepen collaboration and partnerships with local actors, particularly women's organizations.

## **Timeline**

**This is a living document.** Progress on field implementation should be a priority topic at every annual partners' meeting, and the strategy updated to reflect learning, progress, and ongoing challenges.

## **Part One: Activities Within Partner Organizations**

As noted above, many field-based colleagues are not yet well-informed on the Call to Action or the GBV Accountability Framework. This limits the added value and impact the Call to Action can bring to their advocacy, funding, and programming efforts on GBV and gender equality. As a matter of course, global partners should undertake the following activities to promote the Call to Action with their colleagues:

**Promote the 2021-2025 Road Map:** The release of the updated Road Map is a valuable opportunity to strengthen internal awareness of and engagement in the Call to Action. At a minimum, partners could:

- Engage with key field staff on development of the organization's commitments under the Road Map.
- Ensure the head of agency/senior leader distributes the Road Map to field leadership—regional, national, sub-national—with a tailored message about the organization's commitments to the initiative and expectations of field staff.
- Consider a webinar or similar session introduced by senior leader(s) that provides an overview for country offices of the Call to Action, the updated Road Map, and the organization's commitments.

**Introduce and Begin Integration of the GBV Accountability Framework:** The role and responsibilities of Call to Action partners under the Framework will vary by mandate. Each Call to Action partner should:

- Use the Framework as relevant to shape organizational commitments under the updated Road Map.
- Disseminate the Framework to field offices with appropriate messaging on staff responsibilities by their role in the system.
- Promote ownership of the Framework by humanitarian leadership and accountability for implementation.
- Urge field leadership to promote the Framework among local and national staff and partners.

**Include Call to Action/GBV Accountability Framework on Agenda of Key Staff Convenings:** Allot time for discussion of the Call to Action's successes and challenges during regional or global meetings of field staff—leadership, policy, and technical meetings.

Note: When there is turnover in field leadership or senior management, incoming staff should be briefed on the Call to Action/Accountability Framework and the organization's Call to Action commitments.

**Use Annual Reporting Process to Strengthen Organizational Buy-In:** Every partner is expected to report annually on progress in meeting their commitments under the Road Map. These reports are published on the Call to Action website and they inform the annual global Progress Report. The following actions could strengthen engagement and a sense of commitment throughout the organization:

- Request examples from the field of good practices to feature in the partner report and potentially in the global Report.
- Disseminate the report to Regional Directors, Country Representative/Head of Mission with a message from the Head of Agency requesting that it be shared with all appropriate staff. This is also an opportunity to share key advocacy messages with field leadership. For example, a Country Representative that sits on the Humanitarian Country Team could be reminded to ensure that the Call to Action/GBV Accountability Framework is a regular agenda item. Donor representatives could be reminded to include it at least quarterly on the agenda of humanitarian donor group meetings.

## **Part Two: Collective Activities Within/Across Stakeholder Groups**

The multi-stakeholder membership of the Call to Action is the source of its power and potential for impact. Even as partner organizations work to strengthen uptake within their own organizations, there are actions global partners can undertake together—within and across Stakeholder Working Groups—to advocate for Call to Action considerations and institutionalization of the Accountability Framework with field-based humanitarian leadership, donors, and other key actors.

This section of the strategy begins with examples of standard actions that should be undertaken by the collective partnership or particular Working Groups. It then moves to examples of more intensive field-based efforts that require greater investments of time and resources.

**Note:** Whenever collective Call to Action activities are planned for a particular setting, the global Call to Action focal points of every partner working in that setting should be informed so they can provide needed information and support to their field operations.

**Advocate for Inclusion of Call to Action/GBV Accountability Framework in Key Humanitarian Field Guidance, Strategies, and Meetings of Humanitarian Leadership.** The States/Donors Working Group and the International Organizations Working Group in particular should collaborate on the advocacy required to secure this strategic priority. The Working Groups should identify their full target list in 2020. Examples of guidance, strategies and meetings include:

- HCT Centrality of Protection Strategies
- Humanitarian Country Team Compacts, Strategies, Retreats, and Meetings
- Peer-to-Peer Webinars and guidance notes
- Meetings of IASC Principals, Emergency Directors Group, Global Cluster Coordinator Group meetings, and missions
- Annual Meetings of Humanitarian Coordinators and Cluster/Sector Coordinators
- Director-level IASC quarterly regional meetings

**Collaborate on Dissemination and Institutionalization of the GBV Accountability Framework:** As the Accountability Framework is rolled out, partners across Stakeholder Working Groups can work with colleagues on the Accountability Framework Steering Committee to support uptake in various ways:

- Fund and organize trainings/webinars by stakeholder type on the component(s) of the Framework relevant to their work.
- Provide country-level guidance for collaboration and partnership on implementation of the Framework.
- Support the development and distribution of tools in multiple languages to support implementation of the Framework.
- Help mobilize resources, including technical assistance, in countries of focus for Framework implementation.

**Promote Attention to Call to Action Priorities in HNO and HRP Processes:** The Call to Action partnership should develop annual advocacy messages in conjunction with key points in the humanitarian program cycle to share with humanitarian leadership and our field colleagues across stakeholder groups.

- The States/Donors Working Group should ensure that their mission heads advocate with Humanitarian Coordinators, Humanitarian Country Teams, cluster/sector leadership, and implementing partners in affected countries for full attention to GBV prevention, response, and risk mitigation in these processes.
- Call to Action partners that sit on Humanitarian Country Teams should promote the Call to Action recommendations in all relevant planning sessions.
- Agencies should support uptake of the recommendations with humanitarian leadership and integrate the recommended actions into their own work plans and those of the clusters/sectors which they lead or in which they participate.

**Highlight Call to Action’s Field Impact and Initiatives, Including the Accountability Framework, at High-Level Global, Regional, and Crisis-Specific Meeting:** Partners across Working Groups should conduct this advocacy at such high-level gatherings as:

- Commission on the Status of Women and the September meetings of the UN General Assembly.
- Donor Conferences on Humanitarian Crises. A good example is the focused attention on GBV and the Call to Action’s Northeast Nigeria Road Map at the Berlin Conference on the Lake Chad Basin in 2018.

**Ensure Call to Action/Accountability Framework Considerations Aare Built into the Training and Missions of GBV Coordinators, REGAs, ProCaps, GenCaps and the Guidelines Reference Group:** While this is the lead responsibility of particular Call to Action partners, a number of partners across Stakeholder Working Groups have opportunities to inform the terms of reference for deployments and provide targeted support for technical missions.

**Disseminate Annual Global Progress Report:** A senior official in the government of the Call to Action Lead should disseminate the Report to heads of partner organizations with a transmittal message that is inclusive of HQ and field actors and intended to be shared with them.

### **Collective Activities/Higher Investment**

In addition to standard operating activities described above, **groups of partners with the resources and the reach** should commit to modeling the promising experiences of the Nigeria and DRC Call to Action Road Map pilots, the piloting of the GBV Accountability Framework in Northern Iraq and South Sudan, and the EU-organized Call to Action awareness raising workshops. Helpful resources detailing the successes and challenges of these efforts are posted in the *In the Field* section of the Call to Action website. Of note, the step-by step [Guide to Developing Field-Level Road Maps](#) references the value of integrating the Accountability Framework in these crisis-specific Road Maps.

An important learning from the four pilot projects is that while these efforts must be owned and led at the field level, there should be a group of champions at the global level who commit to working with champions at the field level to support conceptualization, design, and initial implementation of these initiatives. The initiatives may require a higher investment of global partners’ time and resources in the development phase, but early findings indicate they hold the most promise for meaningful Call to Action engagement with multiple and diverse national and local partners, including women’s organizations. They can also help to build and sustain awareness among stakeholders who are unfamiliar with their GBV related responsibilities or new to specific crisis zones.

**Conduct Field Workshops to Raise Awareness and Strategize Around Call to Action:** In 2018, the EU organized 10 such workshops across several regions. The [workshops](#) focused on collective advocacy and higher-level coordination that would support, but not duplicate, humanitarian coordination mechanisms. Participants included field staff from a mix of Call to Action partners—donor states, IOs and NGOs—as well as national and local actors. The workshops varied by content, geographic coverage, and substantive outputs. One of the benefits to a regional approach was that participants could exchange learning from different settings on how to address common challenges. The workshops also served as a strategic platform for donor engagement, given that many donor funding decisions are made at the regional or country level. Several local organizations that were introduced to the Call to Action at the workshops subsequently became global partners. Overall, participants pointed to the benefits of learning about the Call to Action; getting clarity on relationship between various GBV initiatives and structures; and identifying challenges they could work on together.

There was clear interest among most participants in having follow-up workshops to sustain momentum and review progress. Call to Action partners that have the capacity should come together to develop plans for follow-up activities, perhaps beginning with the workshops where action plans were developed. Follow-up workshops could focus, for example, on taking forward the GBV Accountability Framework under the Call to Action umbrella. While it seems most practical to start with the EU-organized workshops, the door should not be closed to undertaking such an effort in a new location(s).

The EU-organized workshops did require a significant time commitment on the part of the organizers and some funding (venue, catering), but not the heavier investment need to support development of a full country-level Road Map. The “lighter touch” of the workshops may not generate all the benefits of a comprehensive field-level Road Map. However, it is one way to build greater awareness among a mix of stakeholders, including government and CSO actors; stimulate collective advocacy on GBV; catalyze accountability; and potentially galvanize collective action to address a pressing gap in the response.

**Develop and Implement Additional Field-Level Road Maps:** This is a heavier commitment, but early experience from the Northeast Nigeria and DRC pilots has been quite positive from several perspectives: better donor engagement; meaningful partnership with government actors and CSOs; improved GBV risk mitigation possibilities across clusters; and more opportunities to advocate globally.

[The Guide to Developing Field-Level Road Maps](#) lays out the range of issues that need to be considered before embarking on such an effort. For example, funding should be available for a field-based advisor to work with partners on development and initial implementation of the Road Map. There must be a core group of champions in country, including a major donor representative, to help kick off and eventually lead the project. Early consultations with GBV and Protection Coordinators must be undertaken as part of any initial scoping exercise.

If, in consultation with field colleagues, a decision is made to move ahead with a field-level Road Map, the *Guide* provides step-by step recommendations, tips, and resources for every phase of the process. It also includes information in the body of the *Guide* and in dedicated annexes on strengthening partnerships with CSOs and on engaging Call to Action donor partners at country level.

Given initial positive findings from the two pilot Road Map countries, and the opportunity that a comprehensive Road Map offers to advance field implementation of the Call to Action and the Accountability Framework, partners should explore the possibility of developing field-level Road Maps in other settings.

### **Part Three: Expanding Engagement with Local Actors**

The Call to Action Road Map identifies full engagement with local actors, particularly women’s organizations, as essential to achieving transformative action on GBV. One of the Call to Action’s core principles articulated in the 2021-2015 Road Map reads, “The engagement, leadership and participation of local organizations and local leaders, particularly women and women’s organizations, is critical to effective humanitarian action.” Partners are taking this core principle forward by integrating localization as a Key Action Area under every Outcome of the Road Map, including the funding Outcome.

Several CSO global partners, as well as CSO stakeholders in the Northeast Nigeria and DRC Road Maps, have indicated that involvement with the Call to Action offers opportunities to engage directly with donors and key international humanitarian actors, learn more about and potentially influence humanitarian processes, and strengthen relationships among CSOs working on GBV prevention and response. As one participant put it during the 2020 annual partners meeting, “Local actors must be at the humanitarian table, with full access to the platform and its multiple stakeholders.”

Based on experience to date, it seems the potential benefits of joining the Call to Action may be clearer and more attainable for many CSOs when there is something to be part of in their country or region. The Call to Action’s current ways of working at the global level are less accessible for some number of CSOs and the almost universal use of English is also a barrier. To date, only the global Call to Action Road Map, the Guide to Developing Field-Level Road Maps, and the GBV Accountability Framework have been translated into Arabic, French, and Spanish. That said, CSOs are not a monolithic stakeholder group, and paths for deepening their engagement in Call to Action should be open at all levels.

Below are suggestions for expanding partnerships with CSOs by individual Call to Action partner organizations and groups of partners. As Call to Action welcomes many more CSOs as national or global partners in the coming years, the development of a more comprehensive CSO engagement framework should be led by them and supported by the full partnership.

Note: CSOs in the Call to Action at the global and field level continue to stress the need for strong, sustained, and direct funding for their work. This issue must be addressed as a matter of urgency to ensure the core principle of localization is realized in all aspects of Call to Action’s work. Partners should review the Report from the 2020 Partners Meeting for reflections on funding barriers and suggested actions.

#### **Activities by Individual Partners**

**Make Specific, Measurable Commitments** to support local actors under the post-2020 Road Map.<sup>6</sup> Give priority to women’s organizations. Ensure that in displaced settings, the concerns of refugees and IDPs and/or groups led by them are fully represented. Below are examples of commitments raised in the 2020 Partner meeting. Consult the meeting report for other ideas:

- IO and INGO partners develop joint commitments with CSOs.
- Call to Action stakeholders (States and Donors/IOs/INGOs) make a shared commitment to increase the percent and amount of GBV funding to women-led organizations.
- Donors collaborate to develop a pooled fund for CSOs.
- Donors commit to provide direct support to CSOs to serve in GBV sub-cluster coordination role.

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<sup>6</sup> GBV Accountability Framework partners have committed to promoting local ownership of the Framework and defining accountability to women and girls at field level.



**Bring Local Partners into Call to Action Field Initiatives:** These include additional field workshops, efforts to implement the GBV Accountability Framework, and the development of field-level road maps. Local actors should be engaged early in the consultation phase, and their meaningful participation maintained throughout. CSO representatives, especially women leaders, should be supported to take on leadership roles whenever possible.

**Increase CSO Members in the Global Call to Action:** Identify national/local organizations whose participation as a global partner would be mutually beneficial. Support a targeted number to join the global Call to Action and provide funding and logistics support to allow their participation in global activities such as the annual partners meeting.

Note: In discussions with CSOs, there must be honest dialogue on the benefits of partnership at either the field or global level—for example, advising potential partners that membership does not automatically bring program funding, nor does the Call to Action initiative have its own pool of funds.

### **Activities across Stakeholder Working Groups**

**Collaborate to support CSO participation in field initiatives:** As noted above, individual Call to Action partners should ensure their local partners have every opportunity to help develop, participate in, and lead Call to Action field initiatives. This will be more beneficial for local organizations and the work of the Call to Action if partners from all stakeholder groups collaborate on this effort.

**Continue to learn from CSO partners:** Invite global CSO partners and partners in Call to Action field initiatives to provide ongoing guidance on how best to partner with local actors. Integrate the learning into Call to Action work planning.

Note: In a related area, Stakeholder Working Groups should engage with the global GBV AoR on ways to mutually reinforce localization efforts.

**Support CSO partners' engagement in global Call to Action Events:** Continue the practice of supporting global CSO partners and representatives from countries familiar with the Call to Action to play prominent roles in global and regional advocacy events and participate in the annual partners meeting. Partners can join forces to ensure the required funding and logistics support is in place and take steps to maximize the value to CSOs of their participation in these events.<sup>7</sup>

**Recruit at least two southern-based coalitions or networks** to become global partners. Prioritize those with strong participation from women's organizations. Partnering with these networks may be a mutually beneficial way to engage and support their members as well.

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<sup>7</sup> See recommendations from November 2019 Annual Partners Meeting.

## Taking the Plan Forward

As evidenced at the 2019 and 2020 partner meetings, and the priority areas of the 2021-2025 Road Map, there is a strong commitment to strengthen Call to Action's field engagement and partnerships with local organizations, particularly women's organizations. Together with commitments partners make under the updated Road Map, implementation of this strategy will allow the Call to Action partnership to move forward in a concrete, timely, and effective manner.

Upon adoption of the Strategy, the following steps should be taken to integrate it into all areas of Call to Action work:

- **New Commitments:** Identify new Road Map commitments that can be made individually and collectively by partners to help support the strategy.
- **Call to Action Processes:** Reflect field engagement strategy in work processes by:
  - Prioritizing the strategy across Stakeholder Working Groups.
  - Integrating relevant components into the annual work plans of each Stakeholder Group and the work plans of the Call to Action Steering Committee and Lead.
  - Include field implementation as a priority agenda item for every Annual Partners Meeting.
- **Coordination on GBV Accountability Framework Implementation:** Maintain close collaboration with the GBV Accountability Framework Steering Committee as it develops more detailed plans to introduce the Framework in multiple settings.
- **Resources:** Identify resources (human and financial, messaging materials) to support effective implementation of the strategy. For example:
  - At the 2020 partners meeting, partners asked for messages to support introduction of the Call to Action in the field and the components of the strategy.
  - There was also a suggestion to develop guidance on how to address barriers that can block feminist organizations from participating in humanitarian decision-making and leadership.
  - Multiple partners expressed the need for a diagram that clarifies the relationship between various GBV and Gender Equality processes, mechanisms, and initiatives, including the Call to Action.
  - Additional resources are also needed to support uptake of the Accountability Framework.