

## **REPORT**

### **CALL TO ACTION ANNUAL PARTNERS MEETING**

**15 – 16 June 2022 - UN City, Marmorvej 51, Copenhagen**

The overall objectives of the meeting were:

- 1. Take stock of progress on Road Map implementation for 2021 with showcase of Call to Action results and bolster the partnership’s collective spirit**
- 2. To present, discuss challenges and identify solutions to strengthening localisation efforts in GBV prevention and response, including more concrete modalities regarding cooperation and engagement with WLOs**
- 3. To increase commitment among key decision-makers about CtA**

#### **High-level Segment**

The purpose of the high-level segment was to engage and listen to representatives from management levels. The panel discussion had a talk show style and focused on Reflections on Call to Action partnership and its value-add. Speakers were:

**Ms. Elizabeth Tan**, UNHCR, Director of the Division of International Protection

**Mr. Jeffrey Labovitz**, IOM, Director of Department for Emergencies

**Ms. Cathrine Andersen**, Norway, Special Representative for Protection of Civilians

**Mr. Joachim Bleicker**, Germany, Deputy Ambassador to Denmark

**Ms. Traci L Baird**, EngenderHealth, President and CEO

**Ms. Ebony Riddel Bamber**, CARE International, Director of Global Advocacy

Speakers stressed perspectives from their different mandates and spoke to the value-add of being a multi-stakeholder alliance with a joint strong voice. International organization (IO) speakers noted the importance of integrating GBV into their agencies’ priorities and focusing on localization efforts and GBV risk mitigation in their responses to crises. Several of the donor government speakers also recognized the need for strengthened partnerships, accountability, and defining their role in expanding flexible and predictable funding for GBV programs. INGO speakers emphasized the critical importance of amplifying the voices of local experts, involving women in humanitarian responses, and ceding space to support the work of local women-led organizations.

## **Setting the scene: From global concept to local context – a pilot initiative in Nigeria: UNFPA Country Director, Ulla Mueller**

Ulla Mueller, UNFPA Resident Representative in Nigeria, presented the Nigeria case: a CtA pilot country that has put itself in the driver's seat to end gender-based violence in emergencies. The pandemic showed the world how fragile progress towards ending GBV has been and Nigeria declared a state of emergency on GBV. Learning from the lessons gained in the humanitarian response, the Nigerian Government, supported by the Danish Government and UNFPA Nigeria, has established a federal structure to end GBV, realising that in protracted crisis, protection and response is a nation-wide responsibility.

The background for rethinking the structure was the COVID-19 melt-down and spike in gender-based violence across all 36+1 states in the country and the challenges that followed. These included:

- Movement of partners and stakeholders – many left during the pandemic
- Response or prevention – mainly response
- Disconnect of the response from government structures
- Absence of strong institutions
- No accountability framework
- Lack of political leadership

When Denmark assumed the role as global chair of Call to Action in 2021, this was an opportunity to re-think the approach and a strong partnership was forged between UNFPA Nigeria and the Danish Embassy in Nigeria. The key intervention included a strong focus on:

- Linking Call to Action to the Humanitarian Country Team.
- Sustaining localization – GBViE course in person to build local CSO/NGO ownership and leadership
- Political leadership to ensure sustainability and buy in
- Analysis and restructuring the Call-to-Action set-up, addressing the challenges.
  - Strategic Task Team (STT) - High Level – strategic direction, decision making and accountability. Co-Led by the Hon. Minister of Women Affairs and Global Chair (currently H.E. Ambassador of Denmark)
  - Technical Task Team (TTT) – Technical recommendations, implementation oversight and advisory role. Co-Led by UNFPA and Director of Gender Affairs, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs.
- Consolidate field presence and political leadership.
- Currently the partnership is focusing on next steps
- Linking Federal actors and Bay states actors – in process
- Establish an accountability framework with clear indicators to measure/track actions.
- Identify key private sector organizations to join the CtA initiative in Nigeria.
- Review and align partners' commitments to outcome and action areas of the Nigeria Road Map.
- Integrate protection and human rights - transition from response to protection and prevention
- Building strong institutions to sustain the results.

## Networking and Speed Dating

All members engaged in speed dating time, an enjoyable exercise that gave members the opportunity to get to know each other across working groups.

## Annual Progress Report 2021 and implementation of Road Map 2021

An [internal memo](#) and [presentation](#) based on 50 self-reports highlighted progress against the first year of the 2021-2025 Road Map. While partners committed to report annually on the progress against their Road Map commitments, the 2021 reports represent only 52% of the partners in the Call to Action so do not fully reflect all partner achievements and challenges in 2021.

### Insufficient reporting

The *number* of reports has remained about the same since 2017. The *percentage* of reports has gone down, with more partners joining the Call to Action (CtA). For the 2017 reporting period, 69% of partners submitted reports; 56% reported for both 2018 and 2019; and 52% reported for both 2020 and 2021.

### Progress

Progress was reported in the following areas (**NB: numbers indicate Key Action Areas**):

- Policy development (1-1);
- Integrating GBV and gender equality into standards, guidelines, tools, and processes (1-3, 3-1, 6-1);
- Supporting the work and leadership of local organizations (1-4, 2-5);
- Prioritization of funding for GBV, including allocating funding to local organizations (4-3);
- Implementation of specialized GBV services (5-1); and
- Allocation and development of resources for risk mitigation (6-6).

### Less information

The following areas had less information available, which may indicate some critical gap areas in commitments made against the Road Map and/or could be a reflection of the limited reports received (**NB: numbers indicate Key Action Areas**):

- Allocation of human and financial resources (1-5, 2-6, 3-4, 5-6);
- Advocacy (2-7, 3-5, 4-4, 6-7);
- Coordination on risk mitigation (2-3);
- Funding for nexus programming (4-5);
- Consultation (5-2, 6-4);
- Accountability for GBV programming (5-4);
- National and local systems strengthening (5-8); and
- Gender equality work (6-3).

### Key themes

- **COVID-19:** in terms of access to affected people; reduced resources for GBV due to heightened COVID-19-related needs; increased rates of GBV and overall levels of need; and operational impacts on training, collaboration, and programming.
- **Increased needs:** due to the exacerbation of ongoing crises, climate change, COVID-19, and new crises in 2021, placing increased pressure on already limited human and financial resources.
- **Barriers:**
  - Insufficient GBV services and challenges to access those services.
  - Unwelcoming environments for GBV and gender equality work.
  - Reluctance to report GBV or seek services due to stigma, discrimination, and fear.
- Challenges to realizing the **CtA commitment to localization**, including barriers to women's participation in the design and implementation of humanitarian services; a lack of resources; and policy and programming environments that do not prioritize GBV or support for local organizations.
- **Moving from policy to action:** the achievements in policy and integrating GBV into tools/guidance are not yet fully translated into action in crises or through resource allocation.
- **Resources:** the continued lack of funding and shortage of human resources for GBV work.
- **Tracking funding:** Most internal systems do not enable the tracing of funds for GBV in emergencies work and allocations for GBV in emergencies work to local organizations.

### Moving ahead

Groups discussed [seven challenges](#), providing the following suggestions to move forward:

#### 1) Achieving our goal:

- Collective action across stakeholder groups is more than an annual meeting and reporting. Prioritise cross-sectoral task teams, e.g. on Advocacy. Consider a GBV commitment marketplace.
- Revise the CtA governance package to improve the transparency, accountability, and ways of working.
- Ensure everyone's voices are heard by acknowledging and addressing the power dynamics.
- Develop statements on specific issues (like the high-level visits' guidance), e.g. on the fact that women-led organizations have capacity; focusing on all types of GBV, not just sexual violence.
- Bridge the gap between technical and political (people who make decisions) levels, including by looking at political commitments outside the humanitarian sphere, e.g. health and development.

## **2) Support to local actors:**

- Highlight the role, capacity, and contextual understanding of women-led organizations (WLOs) and other civil society organizations, instead of questioning it.
- Mentorships between established CtA partners and potential WLO partners.
- Start a cross-stakeholder working group on localization.
- Build trust between local organizations and international NGOs, donors, and UN agencies.

## **3) Prioritization:**

- Organize regular meetings at country-level of the CtA and the GBV AoR for important decision-making, including around funding decisions.
- Headquarters should ensure country colleagues know about their CtA commitments.
- CtA lead could connect partners at country level to discuss priorities to address the context-specific challenges and ensure their participation in the planned country-level workshops.

## **4) Resources (human and financial):**

- Ensure that funding goes to local organizations by addressing the risk aversion. Pooled funds and networks could help get donor funding to local organizations.
- Cross-stakeholder team should continue its work.
- Need to provide protection to WLOs' human resources.
- Hold States/ministries accountable to their commitments to women's issues in the country.

## **5) Policy to action:**

- Simplify: make GBV work more accessible for non-specialists to popularize it.
- Share power meaningfully to allow space for local organizations.
- Share best practices.
- Support funding models developed by local organizations and ensure indirect costs are available to all GBV actors, not just international ones.
- Find ways to hold governments accountable for their GBV commitments.

## **6) Overcoming barriers:**

- Remove the 'false competition' between GBV and gender equality to ensure funding for both.
- Explore how a faith-based approach can harness GBV prevention, response, and mitigation.
- Address counter-terrorism measures, which impact local NGOs' participation in GBV programming.

## **7) Reporting**

- Undertake a survey to better understand why partners are not reporting.
- Too many reports: find ways to accept existing reports that cover the same material.
- CtA reporting is getting too complex and demanding: simplify reporting.
- Government reports can take more work to make the reports public.
- Identify "carrots:" Incentivise reporting and make it a more supportive process for new partners. Ensure learning and avoid stigmas if targets are not met, which can prevent reporting.

- Use “sticks:” Consider consequences for non-reporting (like not being invited to be on CtA panels), particularly for donors, given that international organizations and NGOs already report to donors.

## **Localization segment with Mirror events in Nairobi and Beirut**

On day two, the Call to Action Annual Partners Meeting in Copenhagen hosted a hybrid segment on inclusive localisation and local leadership with simultaneous ‘mirror events’ taking place in Nairobi and in Beirut. The segment focused on *how* to support action by a broad range of local actors (e.g. women-, refugee-, disability-, LGBT+-led organizations) to prevent and respond to GBV, including concrete modalities to strengthen cooperation with and promote women-led organizations (WLOs). Key take aways from joint discussions and working groups are now used by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who has recently taken on the role as co-convener of the Grand Bargain workstream 2 on localization.

### Details:

- 110 online participants
- 155 offline participants (90 in Copenhagen; 45 in Nairobi; 20 in Beirut)
- High-level participation by Assistant Director-General ECHO, Mr. Michael Köhler, Humanitarian Director Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Finland, Ms. Lauratuulia Lehtinen, and Under-Secretary for Development Policy MFA Denmark, Mr. Stephan Schønemann.
- Planning and execution of the segment by Danish MFA in close partnership with Danish Refugee Council, Save the Children Denmark, Danish Red Cross, Oxfam IBIS, Dan Church Aid, as well as their local partners and local country offices.

Highlights from the hybrid segment include keynote speeches from local partners in Beirut and Nairobi, panel debates between national responders and international donors, thematic working groups, and high-level feedback. The opening keynote speech from Beirut by founder and director of SAWA for Development and Aid, Ms. Rouba Mhaissen, is worth highlighting here. Ms. Mhaissen stressed the need for flexible financing to local responders to cover administrative costs. For example, due to a lack of flexible funding, the organization was unable to set aside funds for a replacement during her maternity leave.

During the day, several panel debates - including simultaneous ‘mirror-debates’ in Nairobi and Beirut - highlighted the importance of supporting action by local responders to prevent and respond to GBV. Participants from local organizations including the Titi Foundation from South Sudan, Women Rehabilitation Organisation from Iraq, and Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations emphasised the need for early and equitable inclusion of local actors to utilise their context sensitive experience.

On behalf of the Danish MFA, the Director of Humanitarian Affairs, Civil Society and Engagement, Ms. Mette Thygesen, highlighted Denmark’s strategic focus on local leadership and GBV. Each theme, as well as the nexus between them, are highlighted by Denmark as the global lead on Call to Action 2021-2022 and, more recently, as the new co-convener of the Grand Bargain workstream 2 on localization.

Finally, participants online and offline were divided into one of four thematic working groups each addressing one aspect of how to strengthen cooperation with local responders to GBV. The four themes included quality funding; female leadership; equitable partnerships and the role of intermediaries or; accountability. Key take aways from panel, plenary, and group discussions were:

### **Female leadership**

- Ensure representative leadership grounded in local communities and women's lived experiences.
- Ensure inclusive selection processes. Consider barriers related to language, culture, power structures and access, and facilitate access for more informal WLOs.
- Include relevant and context-sensitive security measures to accommodate WLOs working with sensitive issues including GBV prevention.

### **Equitable partnerships and the role of intermediaries**

- Support long-term partnerships that provide reliable funding and institutional capacity building at the local level. Partnerships must be guided by what local organizations understand to be priorities on the ground.
- Create spaces for dialogue that support meaningful participation by local actors in designing, planning, and summarising, e.g. through active roles as panellists, moderators, and facilitators.
- Support collaboration between formal and informal local organizations and actors to further their collective bargaining power in demanding more equitable partnerships.

### **Quality funding**

- Provide un-earmarked, flexible, multi-year, and continuous funding and overheads. Allow for budget flexibility to accommodate unforeseen expenses and changing needs e.g. in crisis contexts.
- Support funding mechanisms that build capacity among local, informal, and less resourceful organizations. Good examples include financing through networks, pooled funding mechanisms, local- and constituency-led consortium structures, as well as financing secondments between intermediaries and different local organizations.
- Ensure clear, timely, and transparent information on funding processes and modalities. Local actors should be invited to apply for funding, as well as contribute to the design of and strategic focus of funding modalities.

### **Accountability**

- Flip the script – hold the donors accountable to the changes local actors ask for. Donors and intermediaries should be accountable to commitments made towards localisation and local leadership including transfer of funds to local actors.

## **Sharing Resources on GBV in emergencies**

As previous years this agenda point gave members an opportunity to share resources on GBV in emergencies. Member volunteers presented their tools, resources and initiatives: This year the presenters and their topics were:

- **ECHO** – Project in Nigeria and Yemen
- [UNHCR – Assessment results on engaging with WLOs and WRLOs; Acute emergency data collection tool](#)
- [UNFPA – Building bridges between GBV and PSEA actors](#)
- [AoR – GBViE SoPs, GBV & Food Security tool](#)
- [Alight – Broadening Community Based Activism for GBV](#)
- [ActionAid – New toolkit on women’s protection](#)
- [Plan International – Child Marriage research project](#)
- [IMC – Community Leadership Toolkit](#)
- [The SEREDA report, University of Birmingham](#)
- [GBV funding task team: Briefing on GBV funding task team work](#)

## **Updates from lead and Steering Committee on activities and governance issues**

Danish lead, CtA coordinator, Lone Thorup gave an update of CtA priorities and their implementation under Danish leadership. A particular focus has been on localization and increased engagement with women-led organizations, implementation at national level and GBV funding issues. Co-chairs of the working groups, States and donors - Germany Moritz Seiler, Norway, Idar Istefjord, IOs – IOM, Louise O’Shea, UNFPA Emily Krasnor, and NGOs, Arab Women’s Organization, Wesal Abdullah, InterAction, Anna Jaffe, and Plan International Keren Simons each presented main priorities from their work plans 2022.

## **Wrap-up and Closing Statement**

Moderator, Manisha Thomas, wrapped up the annual meeting with a brief summary of the main points regarding Roadmap progress and the need for greater partner reporting and accountability, the calls for more equitable partnerships and donor support – particularly for women-led organizations – to localize humanitarian response, and the shared desire for the Call to Action to grow as an effective multistakeholder partnership. The meeting was officially closed by Denmark, the Deputy Director of the Humanitarian Department, Ms. Fenja Yamaguchi-Fasting.

**The Danish Call to Action leadership thanks all members for their active participation and important input to the work of the Call to Action partnership**