



General Assembly

Distr.: General
10 June 2025

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-ninth session

16 June–11 July 2025

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

**Joint written statement* submitted by Women's Federation
for World Peace International, International Council of
Women, Soroptimist International, Zonta International, non-
governmental organizations in general consultative status,
Coordination Francaise du Lobby Europeen des Femmes,
Dianova International, International Association of Youth
and Students for Peace, Inc., Silver Lining for the Needy
Initiative, non-governmental organizations in special
consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[26 May 2025]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Human Rights in Humanitarian Emergencies with a Focus on Women and Youth

Introduction

Esteemed members of the United Nations Human Rights Council, it is an honor to submit this statement on behalf of the Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI) and our partners. These organizations are dedicated to promoting peace, human rights, and the empowerment of women and girls. Humanitarian and educational programs were the root of the launching of WFWPI in one hundred and sixty nations in 1996, and those lessons learned have become the pillars of our advocacy. As we address the critical issue of human rights in humanitarian emergencies, we emphasize the unique challenges and vulnerabilities faced by women and girls, and the urgent need for gender-responsive humanitarian action.

The Humanitarian Context

Humanitarian emergencies, whether caused by conflict, natural disasters, or disease outbreaks, pose significant threats to human rights. These crises often exacerbate existing inequalities and disproportionately affect women and girls. In such contexts, they face heightened risks of violence, exploitation, and discrimination, while also bearing the brunt of caregiving responsibilities and economic hardship.

Women are not only victims in these situations; they are also frontline responders and leaders in their communities. Their resilience and resourcefulness are critical to the survival and recovery of affected populations. Therefore, it is imperative that humanitarian responses recognize and support the roles of women, ensuring their protection, participation, and empowerment.

Challenges Faced by Women in Humanitarian Emergencies

1. Increased Vulnerability to Gender-Based Violence

In humanitarian emergencies, the breakdown of social structures and protection mechanisms often leads to an increase in gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual violence, domestic abuse, and trafficking. The lack of safe spaces, legal protection, and access to support services leaves women and girls particularly vulnerable. Addressing GBV must be a priority in all humanitarian responses, with measures to prevent violence and provide comprehensive support for survivors.

2. Displacement and Access to Resources

Women and girls often constitute the majority of displaced populations, facing significant barriers to accessing essential resources such as food, water, healthcare, and shelter. Displacement disrupts their access to education and economic opportunities, increasing their dependency and vulnerability. Humanitarian efforts must ensure equitable access to resources and services, addressing the specific needs of women and girls in displaced settings.

3. Health and Reproductive Rights

Humanitarian emergencies can severely disrupt healthcare systems, limiting access to essential health services, including reproductive health care. Women may face challenges in accessing maternal health services, contraception, and support for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Ensuring access to comprehensive healthcare, including reproductive health services, is crucial for protecting women's health and rights during emergencies.

Empowering Women in Humanitarian Response

Empowering women is essential for effective and sustainable humanitarian response. Women's participation in planning and decision-making processes enhances the relevance and effectiveness of humanitarian interventions. Their insights and leadership contribute to more inclusive and resilient recovery efforts.

1. Promoting Women's Leadership

Women's leadership should be supported and recognized in all aspects of humanitarian response. This includes involving women in community-based response efforts, as well as ensuring their representation in national and international decision-making bodies. Leadership training and capacity-building programs can empower women to take active roles in shaping humanitarian strategies.

2. Gender-Responsive Programming

Humanitarian programs must integrate gender perspectives to address the different needs and priorities of women, men, boys, and girls. This involves conducting gender analyses to inform program design, implementation, and monitoring. Gender-responsive programming ensures that interventions do not inadvertently reinforce inequalities and that they contribute to long-term gender equality.

3. Supporting Women's Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment is vital for enhancing women's resilience in humanitarian contexts. Providing women with access to livelihoods, vocational training, and financial resources enables them to contribute to the recovery and development of their communities. Empowering women economically also reduces their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.

4. Education, Youth, and Psychosocial Support

In the midst of humanitarian emergencies, education and psychosocial support are essential elements - especially for youth, and in particular, young women and girls. Schools and learning centers serve as platforms for empowerment, offering continuity, hope, and the tools for recovery. Youth play a crucial role as agents of change, innovation, and resilience in their communities, yet they are often overlooked in humanitarian response strategies. Young women face compounded challenges, including disruption to education and early marriage.

Additionally, the psychological toll of conflict, displacement, and trauma disproportionately affects women and girls, who often carry the emotional burdens of caregiving amidst crisis. Humanitarian responses must prioritize inclusive, youth-focused education programs, while also ensuring access to trauma-informed mental health care. By investing in the education and psychosocial well-being of youth, we support the emergence of a new generation equipped to rebuild and lead resilient, equitable societies.

Call to Action

The Women's Federation for World Peace International calls on member states, humanitarian organizations, and international bodies to take the following actions:

1. **Prioritize Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response:** Implement comprehensive measures to prevent and respond to GBV in humanitarian settings. This includes establishing

safe spaces, providing legal protection, and ensuring access to medical and psychosocial support for survivors.

2. **Ensure Equitable Access to Resources and Services:** Design humanitarian programs that provide equitable access to essential resources and services for women and girls. This includes prioritizing their access to food, water, healthcare, shelter, and education.

3. **Strengthen Health and Reproductive Rights:** Ensure the availability of comprehensive healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health services, in humanitarian emergencies. This is crucial for safeguarding women's health and rights.

4. **Promote Women's Participation and Leadership:** Support and recognize women's leadership in humanitarian response efforts. Involve women in planning and decision-making processes at all levels to ensure inclusive and effective interventions.

5. **Implement Gender-Responsive Programming:** Integrate gender perspectives into all aspects of humanitarian programming. Conduct gender analyses to inform program design and ensure that interventions address the specific needs and priorities of women and girls.

6. **Support Economic Empowerment Initiatives:** Provide women with access to livelihoods, vocational training, and financial resources to enhance their economic empowerment and resilience in humanitarian contexts.

7. **Establish Education and Trauma Healing Centers:** Invest in inclusive education, youth leadership, and trauma-informed mental health support. By empowering youth today, we build the foundation for resilient and equitable societies tomorrow.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Women's Federation for World Peace International reaffirms its commitment to advocating for the rights and empowerment of women in humanitarian emergencies. By prioritizing gender equality and women's rights in humanitarian action, we can create more resilient and inclusive communities. Let us work together to ensure that women and girls are protected, empowered, and recognized as key agents of change in the face of humanitarian crises.
