

REGIONAL GENDER TASK FORCE (RGTF)

Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND

In March 2022, UNHCR and partners launched the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) to promote and implement a comprehensive response to support efforts by neighbouring countries to protect and assist refugees coming from Ukraine. UNHCR leads and coordinates the implementation of the RRP in line with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) and in close collaboration and consultation with relevant government counterparts, and with the support of inter-agency partners and other stakeholders. Within the framework of the RRP and building on existing country-level humanitarian coordination structures, an inter-agency Regional Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) chaired by UNHCR with participation from RRP members and other relevant actors has been established in Geneva to ensure efficient situational information management and support to country level coordination as required. In March, an agreement was reached among RCF members on the need to establish a Regional Gender Task Force under the umbrella of the Regional Refugee Coordination Forum to mainstream and integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in refugee response.

References to gender, where not already explicit, are understood to refer to intersectional gender, which recognises that people's lives shaped by their identities, relationships and social factors i.e. to include age, disability and other forms of diversity relevant to the context, such as member of a minority group, LGBTQI+ persons, etc.

Integrating gender equality measures, as well as age and diversity dimensions, into the cross-sectoral refugee response efforts is critical to ensuring that women, girls, boys and men — particularly the most at heightened risk of exclusion and marginalized — have equitable access to (and benefit from) relief, services and information. Effective refugee response programming takes into account and meets the specific needs of refugees and those affected by crisis. Sectors must make gender equality a central priority in Multi-Sectoral Response Frameworks, which will guide project partners in designing projects that meet the distinct needs of persons in all their diversity, including women, girls, boys and men equally/equitably, and non-binary (or gender non-conforming) persons. Understanding how crises affect differently marginalized groups and those at heightened risk through an intersectional lens is key to design gender-responsive and human rights-based humanitarian interventions that meet the specific needs and diverse priorities of persons of concern. The strength and capacities of forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls and their expertise should be included in protection responses, decision-making and leadership structures.

Humanitarian actors have an obligation to promote gender equality through humanitarian actions in line with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) 'Gender Equality Policy Statement' (2008), the IASC Policy and Accountability Framework on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action (2017), and its accompanying Gender Accountability Framework, IASC Gender in Humanitarian Action Handbook (2018), the Gender with Age Marker (GAM), the Agenda for Humanity from the World Humanitarian Summit (2016), and the Grand Bargain. Humanitarian actors also have an obligation to support women's and girls' protection, participation and empowerment through targeted actions, as articulated in the Women, Peace and Security thematic agenda outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

An [Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls \(2020\)](#) recommended that a gender equality-specific working group (such as the Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) Working Group) was necessary for effective GEEWG coordination within a response. GiHA Working Groups link cluster experts and related gender mandated agencies and

enable close collaboration, communication and coordination across sectors and technical working groups. This ensures gender analysis, and advocacy is available, adequately coordinated, disseminated, and utilized, including for strategic planning purposes such as the development and implementation of refugee response plans. GiHA Working Groups also extend gender capacity to other sectors (including through technical inputs and capacity building) and emphasize the importance of and facilitate the participation and leadership of local women's organizations across coordination and decision-making structures and processes.

On 11 March 2022, at a meeting convened by Regional Issue-based Coalitions to discuss the implications of the war in Ukraine for women and girls in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Region, the establishment of a Regional Gender Task Force under the umbrella of the Regional Refugee Coordination Forum was recommended.

OBJECTIVES

The Regional Gender Task Force (RGTF) will provide technical and policy guidance to Working Groups and other related structures established under the RRRP at the regional and country levels, including where other gender coordination structures exist (i.e., the Gender Task Force in Moldova). It will aim to become the main coordination, advocacy, and information platform on gender in humanitarian action at the regional level. More specifically, it will:

- Serve as a practical and demand-driven regional support mechanism to all the sectors engaged in the refugee response, offering support with resource materials, including standard Tip Sheets, guidance, mapping of local partners, etc., and technical surge rosters.
- Enable close collaboration, communication and coordination across the RRRP structures to ensure that gender analysis pools existing and planned assessments and analysis from RGTF members and that advocacy messages are available, adequately coordinated, disseminated, and utilized, including for strategic planning purposes such as the development and implementation of refugee response plans.
- Extend gender capacity through demand-driven technical inputs and capacity building, and strongly facilitate the participation and leadership of women's organizations across coordination and decision-making structures and processes.

TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1) Coordination

- Convene meetings of gender focal points, advisers and advocates at the regional level, including working groups and key organisations to exchange information, analysis and address gender inequality issues in refugee response action (needs, gaps, inefficient response efforts).
- Coordinate with sectors and other working groups and other actors in the regional refugee response to ensure that gender issues are addressed in all phases of intervention.
- Include women's and girls' rights organisations and networks at the regional level, in the RGTF to promote their influence and engagement in all aspects of response, including through engagement in coordination structures and oversight committees.
- Share the lessons learned and good practices on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment programming and initiatives, including on mainstreaming gender equality in the humanitarian-peace-development nexus (HDPN).
- Regularly undertake capacity development on gender-responsive humanitarian action, preparedness, resilience, and recovery.
- Strengthen networks/linkages between gender advocates from both national and local levels. Link to global-level opportunities, where appropriate.

2) Technical Support, Guidance and Capacity Development

- Provide technical guidance, including through the use of available tools from national actors, UN actors¹ and others, also based on the [Interagency Standing Committee's Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action](#) for the integration of gender dimensions into sectors' work and cross-sector joint actions (policies, guidelines, tools, advocacy, briefs, assessments, planning, programming, and monitoring).
- Promote the use by the sectors of the IASC Gender with Age Marker (GAM) and provide support for its application.
- Offer demand-driven technical support and expertise, including gender analysis, review of response plans, preparedness actions, as well as training, assessment and advocacy tools at a regional and country level to ensure that the refugee responses support effective and timely gender- and diversity-responsive actions.
- Support in ensuring gender analysis and gender-responsive assessments and research, messaging and feedback mechanisms for each sector and across sectors including sex, age and disability disaggregated data. Where possible, efforts should be made to disaggregate data by additional diversity factors such as member of a minority group, etc. Refugee women and girls should be active participants in designing and implementing research and have an active role as decision-makers influencing coordination and programming.

3) Advocacy and Information Sharing

- Prepare coordinated and multidimensional gender briefs and analysis at the regional level to ensure gender equality programming and protection mainstreaming, are properly reflected in country level response efforts.
- Ensure linkages and information sharing with other established coordination mechanisms for the refugee response.
- Strengthen regional advocacy and information sharing activities on gender responsive refugee response.
- Share lessons learned and good practices on gender-responsive programming, including through provision of regional platforms and events for affected women in local communities to participate in these dialogues through local coordination mechanisms structures. Explore opportunities to share good practices regionally and globally, if feasible and applicable.

LINKAGE WITH OTHER REGIONAL COORDINATION STRUCTURES

The RGTF will ensure coordination and linkages with the RRRP structures at the regional level, including the Regional Protection Working Group and Sub-Groups, the Accountability and Inclusion Working Group, Cash Working Group and PSEA network. At the county level, the RGTF will coordinate with gender coordination structures that exist (i.e., the Gender Task Force in Moldova) and other coordination mechanisms, offering support and guidance on a demand-driven basis.

The RGTF will also engage and closely coordinate its work with relevant Regional Issue-based Coalitions (IBCs), including on Gender Equality², to support multi-dimensional gender analysis at the regional level.

MEMBERSHIP AND CHAIRING

¹ For example, [UNHCR - UNHCR Gender Equality Toolkit](#)

² The IBC-GE is comprised of members from 15 UN entities and is co-chaired by UNFPA and UN Women. It works to ensure a coordinated UN system approach to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Europe and Central Asia. It aims to strengthen regional engagement to promote gender equality, provide more coherent and timely policy guidance and technical support and improve coordination, communication as well as information sharing on key lessons and good practices.

The RGTF is open to all partners (including UN agencies and other international organisations, international and sub-regional national NGOs and civil society organisations) currently or planning to be engaged in the humanitarian response to the refugee crisis.

The RGTF is currently co-chaired by UN Women and CARE International. The nomination of a new co-chair whenever the role is vacant will be subjected to the voting of the RGTF members, based on the availability of the new co-chairing organization to perform the established roles and responsibilities.

Responsibilities of the co-chairs include:

- 1) Ensuring close and effective collaboration and coordination between co-chairs and with and among members;
- 2) Convening monthly meetings and encourage participation by identifying meaningful content and providing feedback on key gender issues;
- 3) Circulating a draft agenda to members not later than one week before the regular monthly meeting, giving the members the opportunity to suggest additional items for discussion;
- 4) Drafting and circulating minutes of meetings and meeting materials within one week of each meeting, alternating between co-chairs.
- 5) Promoting coordination and information sharing on gender and intersectionality issues among key actors and structures across the humanitarian response;
- 6) Offering technical support to enhance knowledge on GiHA to relevant stakeholders working in the humanitarian response through capacity building and the development of tools and guidance.
- 7) Participating and representing the task force in relevant interagency coordination working groups as needed;
- 8) Ensuring decisions are taken by consensus in a transparent manner;
- 9) Promoting and supporting initiatives to increase the participation of women-led and women rights organisations in decision-making processes, and their engagement and meaningful participation in the the Regional Refugee Response Plan;
- 10) Drafting an annual work plan that is created following the needs of the context and the members;
- 11) Reviewing, monitoring and advancing the progress of the work plan;
- 12) Facilitating to enhance coordination mechanisms with the Country Office Gender Task Forces, and bring Country Office level needs and priorities to the attention of the RGTF;
- 13) Providing technical directioning on the outputs and products the RGTF will create based on the Regional Gender Analysis or other up-to-date assessments at the regional level.

MEETINGS AND PERIODICITY

The RGTF convenes virtually on a monthly basis, every third Wednesday of each month from 16h00 to 17h30 (Istanbul time). Ad hoc meetings may be called at short notice in case of critical issues with a regional dimension. Minutes of the RGTF meetings will be circulated among all members in a timely manner.

REVISION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference guiding the structure and activities of the RGTF will be revised every six months and/or based on immediate needs as agreed by the members.