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Women Deliver Announces New Advocacy Effort For Girls and Women in Humanitarian Settings

New advocacy effort calls for more effective gender-sensitive humanitarian action and engagement of girls and women affected by emergencies

14 March 2018, New York, NY – Today, Women Deliver – a leading global advocacy organization working for gender equality and the health, rights, and wellbeing of girls and women – announced that it will be bolstering its advocacy efforts to drive more concrete action for girls and women in humanitarian settings.

The effort will leverage Women Deliver’s leadership in global gender equality advocacy to address an often forgotten reality: that the needs of girls and women are consistently overlooked in humanitarian action, especially when it comes to their maternal, sexual, and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Despite global commitments to prioritize women’s health and rights in emergencies, less than 1% of humanitarian aid prioritized gender equality significantly in 2014. Limited collaboration between development and humanitarian organizations contributes to situations where the basic needs of girls and women are chronically sidelined and left unmet.

“The state of today’s emergencies requires all of us to be more steadfast and unapologetic in our push for better programs, policies, and investments for girls and women in humanitarian settings,” said **Katja Iversen, President/CEO of Women Deliver**. “That’s why Women Deliver is investing considerably in the knowledge, capacity, and human resources we need, to be smarter and more effective advocates for girls and women in these volatile environments.”

Women Deliver’s new effort stems from knowing that development-focused organizations can and must do more to support gender-sensitive humanitarian action. With generous support from the Canadian government, Women Deliver is leveraging what the organization already does well – convening, communicating, advocating, and partnership-building – to drive more meaningful change for girls and women in emergencies. Whether behind-the-scenes in private meetings or front and center at the world’s most influential forums, Women Deliver’s new humanitarian team will join other advocates in pushing for progress in women’s health, rights, and wellbeing, including their SRHR, in humanitarian settings.

“During my missions abroad, I always take the time to sit down with women that have fled violence and persecution. We met with women and girls that have experienced unspeakable acts as a result of sexual and gender-based violence,” said **Marie-Claude Bibeau, Canada’s Minister of International Development and La Francophonie**. “I know that our partnership with Women Deliver will help to give a voice to all of those women and girls that are too often forgotten.”

A core component of the initiative is to elevate the voices and help build the capacity of women-focused civil society organizations (CSOs) to influence humanitarian decisions that affect their lives. Examples from Haiti, Afghanistan, and beyond show that women-focused CSOs are often first to respond when disasters strike, and understand the challenges and opportunities to delivering aid most effectively. Nevertheless, only 0.2% of humanitarian aid dollars currently funds local CSOs – a missed opportunity to invest in those with the best local knowledge.

“Women are at the heart of their family’s health, education, wellbeing, and security. They bind and strengthen their communities, and are the first responders – and our best partner – in times of crisis,” said **Her Royal Highness Princess Sarah Zeid**, an advocate for maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health in humanitarian settings. “Transformative change and bold action is required to support girls and women, in the hardest of times and in the worst of places, so they can drive peace and prosperity. I applaud Women Deliver’s bold evolution and welcome them as a strong new ally in our work to ensure that every woman and every child survives and thrives everywhere.”

The humanitarian initiative was announced by Women Deliver at the UN Headquarters during the final panel event in a series co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of the United Arab Emirates and Norway to the United Nations, and moderated by HRH Princess Sarah Zeid, on the actions needed to address the disproportionate impact of humanitarian emergencies on women, children, adolescents, and newborns in the next five years. Over 125 participants representing 60 development and humanitarian organizations and 8 governments attended to discuss what the future of gender-sensitive humanitarian action must look like.

Additional information about the initiative can be found at womendeliver.org/humanitarian.

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About Women Deliver: As a leading, global advocate for the health, rights, and wellbeing of girls and women, Women Deliver brings together diverse voices and interests to drive progress for gender equality, with a particular focus on maternal, sexual, and reproductive health and rights. We build capacity, share solutions, and forge partnerships, together creating coalitions, communication, and action that spark political commitment and investment in girls and women. Women Deliver’s new humanitarian advocacy aims to enhance action for girls and women in crisis-affected countries, with a focus on elevating the voices of women-focused organizations in these settings. The humanitarian program is led by Marcy Hersh, a long-time advocate for girls and women in emergencies and fragile states, and is made possible by generous contributions from the Government of Canada.

Learn more at womendeliver.org/humanitarian and follow us on Twitter at [@WomenDeliver](https://twitter.com/WomenDeliver)