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Filippo Grandi UN High Commissioner for Refugees December

Women and girls comprise a large part of the refugee population. They are most often excluded in policy and practice as vulnerable minorities. Their capacities and contributions are often unrecognized and gender equality is an elusive goal. Despite the comprehensive and policy developed over the past years to address the protection needs of refugee women and girls, it is acknowledged that they still suffer endemic rape and gender-based violence (GBV), which is both an outcome of and a major barrier to gender equality. This prevents access to many critical protection measures such as services, information, decent work, health and education, which are the basic requirements for self-reliance and durable solutions, which should be equally available to both men and women. The immense social and economic capital and capacities of refugee women and girls are often underutilized and their voices are silenced. Major barriers block their access to parity with men and boys. While this continues to occur, women and girls remain at risk and their potential in solving problems is lost.

A gender agenda of the fifth thematic meetings and the subsequent High Commissioner's Dialogue was undertaken by UNSW in partnership with UNHCR Gender Equality Unit and SGBV Unit. The New York Declaration includes a strong and clear set of commitments to refugee women and girls. The aims of the Gender Agenda are to ensure that the different particular needs of women and girls, men and boys are recognized throughout the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), specifically as a set of principles in the preamble of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and as action points in each pillar of the Programme of Action (PoA). Additionally, as detailed below, it is proposed that the recommendations most consistently made by all stakeholders and which cross-cut all four pillars be included in a preamble of the PoA.

One clear outcome of the Gender Agenda is the understanding that gender equality and the differences experienced by women and girls, men and boys are merely addressed under the concept of mainstreaming when they are not addressed. The impact of SGBV is still recognized but is often seen as separate from the issues of gender equality and the interlinked issues are often addressed separately, diluting the potential impact of programs. The excellent response to SGBV and Gender Equality by some State agencies and other stakeholders may be duplicated and adapted for use in all situations across all four Pillars of the PoA. Despite the many challenges, UNHCR has institutionalized SGBV prevention and response work including SGBV Standard Operating Procedures, dedicated staff, the Safe from Harm programme, Monitoring and Evaluation and Information Management Systems. However, many challenges remain on the full implementation of these programs. These may be addressed to ensure that SGBV does not become just another acronym in a list of acronyms and that the devastating impact of endemic rape and sexual violence on the achievement of gender equality will be effectively addressed.

It is emphasized that responses may include a mix of targeted actions as well as comprehensive mainstreaming. The addition of the word gender in a sentence or a reference to women and girls as part of vulnerable minorities fails to address

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national ethnic linguistic religious minorities or indigenous groups and lesbian gay bisexual transgender and

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- The work of the Global Response Group will be enhanced by a comprehensive gender strategy including the inclusion of gender specialists and targeted support to ensure the participation of refugee women's community organizations and include targeted support to assist to develop and/or enhance national regional and local gender policy frameworks and services for both refugee and host community women and girls

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Significant protection outcomes for women including through the proposed Data Evidence Alliance

- The refugee women's significant social capital be recognized and harnesses and their organizations are fully included

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