

## WOMEN AS THE BENEFICIARIES AND ACTORS OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

9 - 10 MAY 2015 • ISTANBUL

### FINAL DECLARATION

The second Istanbul Summit was held in Istanbul on 9-10 May, 2015, bringing together over 100 civil society organizations (CSOs) and international organizations with 300 participants, including 20 MPs, from 50 countries. The Summit was organized by the Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF), a CSO with General Consultative Status at the UN ECOSOC. Main partners of the Summit are the African Union, Kimse Yok Mu International Humanitarian Aid and Development Association with Special Consultative Status at the UN ECOSOC. In addition, 34 local supporter organizations from 25 different countries joined the Summit. The Summit supported UN Women's HeForShe campaign.

The Summit highlighted gender as a central component in the definition, planning and execution of humanitarian action. This declaration reflects the key points that emerged from the rich deliberations during the Summit. It outlines the general principles of gender-sensitive humanitarian action with a specific focus on women as beneficiaries and actors.

In this respect, The Summit;

*Recalls* that, in order to be effective, humanitarian action needs to be inclusive and engage women as active participants at all levels;

*Underlines* that humanitarian action that embraces the principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality should explicitly emphasize gender sensitivity;

*Expresses* that humanitarian action must be cognizant of the humanity and dignity of the recipients of humanitarian assistance and protection. Accordingly, it should embrace the letter and the spirit of "do no harm";

*Emphasizes* the need for women, both as actors and beneficiaries, to be part of all levels of decision-making, including the design, planning, execution and monitoring of humanitarian action so as to ensure cost-effectiveness;

*Urges* humanitarian donors to ensure that gender is a key criteria for making funding decisions;

*Prioritizes* context-sensitive humanitarian action by taking into account local, political, cultural realities and indigenous factors;

*Recognizes* that sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) increases in humanitarian crises. National and local crisis-management systems must be gender-sensitive as a primary SGBV prevention measure;



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*Emphasizes* that humanitarian intervention should be cognizant of the elevated risk to women's reproductive health during crises situations, leading to increased levels of maternal mortality and deteriorated mental wellness, and respond accordingly;

*Calls* for gender-sensitive and -balanced reporting by journalists, capturing the diversity of women's perspectives and experiences, not only as victims but as survivors, defenders, witnesses and actors;

*Urges* nation-states and non-state actors to recognize their responsibilities in active prevention of refugee-like situations, including internal displacement, bearing in mind that women and children make up the vast majority of the world's refugee/IDP population;

*Calls* upon the international community to recognize the key role of an empowered local civil society, including women's organizations, in effectively addressing humanitarian crises;

*Welcomes* the upcoming conference of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in December 2015 in Geneva, and World Humanitarian Summit in June 2016 in Istanbul, and calls upon them to incorporate the outcomes of the "Istanbul Summit 2015: Women as the Beneficiaries and Actors of Humanitarian Action."

