

Statement from International Planned Parenthood Federation

TOWARDS A GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES: MEETING NEEDS AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

The International Planned Parenthood Federation would like to thank for this opportunity to contribute to the Global Compact on Refugees thematic debate discussions focused on ‘Meeting needs and supporting communities’.

IPPF is a locally-owned, globally connected civil society movement working to ensure that all human rights of women, girls, young people, and marginalized groups are respected and fulfilled so that no one is left behind; achieve gender equality and empowerment of women; that women, girls and adolescents have access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information, education and services. IPPF is present in 171 countries and thus in a position to deliver SRHR services and information throughout these countries, and increasingly responding to crises across the world. Our localized approach ensures we work across the entire disaster management cycle (mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery). In stable and crisis settings, we protect all people’s human rights, dignity and safety and fight for them to be free from discrimination, stigma and coercion.

Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare is not only a basic human right, it saves lives. Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in emergencies are too often overlooked and under-funded. But women and girls who have been forced to flee crises and conflicts often have limited access to reproductive health care and are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, human trafficking, and forced marriage.

The consequences of being denied SRH care in crises settings are dire; forced pregnancies and childbirths, maternal deaths, an increase in gender based violence and increased STI and HIV transmissions. This can lead to high rates of unsafe abortion and maternal mortality. Disintegrating health systems, unsafe environments, prohibitive costs for services that limits access, lack of information and decision-making power, and fear of further violence for seeking out care all make it difficult for women and girls to access the necessary SRH information and services.

IPPF hereby presents key considerations to meet the needs and support host countries and communities towards a global compact for refugees. General considerations for health provision are presented, followed by specific recommendations on SRHR related matters.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Actively and equally engage with women and men from the refugee community and the health workforce, including those who belong to vulnerable groups, and at all levels in the design and management of health service delivery, including the distribution of supplies;
- Ensure that healthcare provided to refugees is done in ways that, where possible, strengthens service provision to poor and marginalized groups within the host community;
- Identify and address how power dynamics at home and in the refugee community, might deprive certain groups of equal access to health services;
- Ensure ongoing and coordinated health service delivery strategies that address the health needs of women, girls, boys and men, and provide minimum initial service packages, distribute new emergency health kits for safe and clean deliveries and emergency obstetric care;
- Ensure coverage of HIV/Aids control and prevention methods, with attention to responding to gender based violence and associated health risks such as sexually transmitted infections;
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality for health consultations, examinations and care;
- Assess and report on the impact of the health sector response on women, girls, boys and men, in all their diversity, and on outstanding needs.
- Prioritize safety and dignity and avoid causing harm; identify and work on the risks of physical and psychosocial harm and loss of dignity most likely to occur to women, girls, boys and men in different age groups to prevent or minimize any effects. Identify medical or psychologically trained people (many

will not have certificates, but skill and knowledge tests can be administered) and integrate them for the service provision.

- Establish an “ *aunty system*” in camps and amongst refugees, where older women mentor and support younger women. The *aunty* supports in case of medical questions, pregnancies and can also be briefed to look for danger signs in early pregnancy, prevention of GBV etc. This system can be multiplied throughout the camps.
- Disaggregate data at least by sex and age to allow a comprehensive analysis by gender and age group on gender based violence; Include data on disability in data collection.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The key SRHR objectives of the Minimum Initial Services Package (MISP) in crisis settings should be provided. The MISP is an internationally agreed standard and is included in the Sphere standards for emergency response. It aims to reduce maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity in crisis settings:

- Provide services to prevent sexual violence and respond to needs of survivors;
- Ensure access to Maternal and Newborn Care services including basic obstetric emergency services and comprehensive obstetric emergency services to prevent excess maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality;
- Ensure access to a full range of contraceptives including long acting reversible contraceptives, including Emergency Contraception;
- Reduce HIV transmission (provide knowledge and means for intravenous fluid if applicable), ensuring safe blood transfusions; ensure standard precautions and making free condoms available. Continuing ARV’s for those already on treatment; offer HIV testing and treatment in pregnancy to prevent PMTCT;
- Ensure STI syndromic management is available;
- Provide access to safe abortion where it is not against the law and post abortion care to prevent and manage complications of unsafe abortion. These services must be linked to Family Planning and other SRH services to make it effective, including youth friendly services, information and education.
- Develop and implement SRHR services that are tailored for young people, especially adolescent girls who face intersectional vulnerabilities, and recognizing them as active actors and agents of change;

International Planned Parenthood Federation provides its consent for this submission to be posted online.