



United Nations

OCHA's policy on gender equality

OCHA's mission is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors in order to alleviate human suffering, advocate for the rights of all people in need, promote preparedness and prevention and facilitate sustainable solutions. To accomplish this mission, OCHA is committed to working towards the goal of gender equality as pervasive gender inequalities undermine the ability of women and girls to exercise their rights and be active partners in emergency response, rehabilitation and development.

OCHA's policy on gender equality does not seek to duplicate the work of other agencies. OCHA recognizes that other humanitarian actors also have expertise, policy commitments and responsibilities in this area.



Why a policy on gender equality for OCHA?

The policy on gender equality supports better humanitarian assistance. If humanitarian actors are aware of the differences and inequalities between women and men in different cultures and circumstances they can better understand the impact of crises on communities and respond in a more effective manner rather than assuming that the whole community has the same needs and capacities.

By building on the capacities of women in emergencies, communities as a whole can recover faster. If women's lives improve, then the situation of their families and communities improves.

The international community has recognized the importance of supporting the goal of equality between women and men. There is a strong, unambiguous mandate from the Secretary General, the General Assembly, ECOSOC, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), and others to develop strategies to achieve the goal of gender equality through the implementation of gender mainstreaming as a core element of humanitarian assistance.

Who is responsible for OCHA's policy on gender equality?

Promoting the goal of gender equality is an important and shared responsibility of all OCHA staff. OCHA's Senior Management Team plays a crucial role and holds primary responsibility for the implementation of the policy on gender equality. They are responsible for leadership and resource mobilization. Managers will hold staff accountable, encourage and reward innovation and speak out publicly on the importance of gender equality.

UNDERSTANDING

GENDER DIFFERENCES,

INEQUALITIES AND

CAPACITIES IMPROVES

EFFECTIVENESS OF

HUMANITARIAN ACTION



OCHA's responsibilities given its mandate for humanitarian coordination, information management, and advocacy are:

Humanitarian response and coordination

OCHA will work to ensure that humanitarian assistance recognizes and responds to the protection and assistance needs of women and girls, as well as men and boys. OCHA's coordinating role is to identify gaps relating to gender issues and to call on the humanitarian community to develop strategies to fill these gaps. In particular OCHA will:

- Ensure that the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) includes a gender analysis and that the proposed initiatives respond to it.
- Support the work of the humanitarian coordinators and facilitate their work to implement the policy on gender equality.
- Ensure that disasters response and preparedness planning exercises incorporate gender dimensions.
- Remind humanitarian partners of their current institutional policies and commitments to gender mainstreaming and/or promoting women's rights.
- Play an active role in the coordination of a multi-sectoral programme to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.
- Participate actively, and take a leadership role where appropriate, in coordination mechanisms and inter-agency working groups such as the IASC Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance.



Humanitarian policy and evaluation

OCHA will play a leadership role in ensuring that all policy initiatives strive towards the goal of gender equality and incorporate a gender perspective. OCHA will highlight the gender dimensions of other thematic initiatives such as sanctions, protection of civilians, HIV/AIDS and emergencies, and natural disasters. OCHA will:

- Ensure that evaluations and lessons learned studies include gender issues in their terms of reference and incorporate this perspective in their analysis and findings.
- Ensure that new policy initiatives incorporate a gender perspective.
- Highlight gender equality issues within the agenda of protection of civilians.
- Integrate programmes to prevent and respond to gender-based violence throughout all aspects of humanitarian assistance.
- Play a leadership role on the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian crises, including promoting standards of conduct for UN humanitarian personnel that are consistent with the Secretary-General's Bulletin - ST/SGB/2003/13.

Information management and analysis

OCHA will strengthen gender analysis in humanitarian assistance and will support the humanitarian community's analysis of gender dimensions thus contributing to an improved understanding of emergencies, recovery and rehabilitation. OCHA will:

- Ensure the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data and promote awareness of possible biases in information collected.
- Promote the use of gender analysis as a tool to better understand the multiple dimensions of humanitarian crises.
- Promote the greater use of women and women's organizations as sources of information in day-to-day work and on fact-finding and other missions.
- Promote equal representation of women and men in all decision-making forums.

Humanitarian advocacy

OCHA representatives will speak out for the rights of women and girls, including their equitable participation in emergency and reconstruction initiatives. OCHA will:

- Advocate for greater attention to gender issues with governments, local counterparts, donors and other humanitarian actors through both formal and informal channels.
- Continue to bring attention to the issues of gender-based violence including sexual exploitation and abuse, and advocate for adequate support for prevention and response programmes.
- Advocate with partners to meet their commitments to include gender mainstreaming in their programming.

Promoting the goal of gender equality is an important and shared responsibility of all OCHA staff.
