

Grand Bargain Friends of Gender group– 2019 Annual Statement

At the Grand Bargain Sherpa Meeting in Bonn in September 2016 a Friends of Gender Group (FoG) for the Grand Bargain was created. The FoG Group brings together UN agencies, donor agencies and INGOs, with UN Women as its convenor. The FoG Group has been convening regularly to share ideas and look strategically across the Grand Bargain commitments to advocate for the strengthening of individual and collective commitments, priorities and frameworks with a view to advancing the gender equality agenda and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian settings. The work has thus far focused on the four priority workstreams identified by the group: Localisation, Cash, Needs Assessment and Participation Revolution.

The FoG Group wishes to bring to the attention of the 2019 Grand Bargain Annual Meeting key highlights and overall recommendations in relation to the positioning of the Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls agenda within the Grand Bargain. This statement is based on the broad discussions and overall analyses within the FoG Group since its conception, including during its meeting in April 2019, as well as an analysis of key findings presented in the 2018 Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report.

Areas of progress in 2018

The Friends of Gender Group would like to recognise the following areas of progress over 2018:

- **Greater focus on Gender in reporting:** Strengthened reporting on institutional commitments and initiatives among Grand Bargain signatories to advance GEEWG was noted in the 2018 Independent Report especially across the localisation, harmonised needs assessment, cash transfers and participation revolution workstreams. The Grand Bargain Facilitation Group, together with the FoG Group, with support from the Overseas Development Institute, had contributed to this shift, particularly through revised reporting templates.
- **Greater focus on Gender in select work streams with a view to enhancing accountability and commitments to GEEWG in humanitarian action:** Increased involvement by the FoG Group members in the work of select workstreams has resulted in enhanced collaboration around new joint initiatives particularly on gender responsive localisation, cash, participation and harmonised needs assessments.
- **Greater reference and engagement with local actors and women's organizations:** Strengthened partnerships and increased investments in local and/or national systems and actors, including women's rights organisations and organisations working for the advancement of gender equality was a key theme across signatory reporting. Furthermore, individual signatories reported various efforts to integrate gender in their policies and practices on participation with particular focus on PSEA/SH related initiatives and investments in promoting women's leadership in humanitarian settings.
- **Gender responsive cash programming:** Evidence from the self-reports suggests that there has been increased focus on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls through cash programming and related research/capacity development initiatives as part of a broader strategy to mitigate and/or respond to gender discrimination and harmful practices, including GBV, lack of economic opportunities and inadequate leadership spaces for women.

Challenges

- **Uneven progress:** While progress was notable in the four FoG Group priority workstreams and overall reporting, the picture remained mixed as to how gender considerations are being factored into the work of other workstreams and signatories in other areas (ref to Independent Report).
- **Resistance:** The gaps in explicit gender commitments in the Grand Bargain resulted in resistance amongst some actors in relation to increased reporting requirements on gender in 2018 (ref to Independent Report). The Independent Report however indicates that there is a strong and logical argument for the Grand Bargain to be used as a catalyst for implementing existing global commitments and standards on gender equality (IASC commitments), including through requiring more detailed reporting on this agenda.

- **Capacity Gaps:** Gender in humanitarian action remains an area of weak capacity for many signatories, which pose a challenge in translating GEEWG commitments meaningfully into quality, results-oriented and sustainable funding, partnerships and programming.

Way forward

The Friends of Gender Group would like to congratulate Minister Sigrid Kaag for her appointment as the new Grand Bargain Eminent Person and calls on the Eminent Person to champion the gender equality agenda in the Grand Bargain. The FoG group reiterate its commitment to work closely with the Facilitation Group and co-conveners in the advancement of Gender mainstreaming in the Grand Bargain agenda. The Friends of Gender Group remains committed to facilitating discussions within and across workstreams with a view to advancing the GEEWG agenda along the issues and priorities identified in the ‘successes and bottlenecks’ related submission by the Group as a follow up to the GB Independent Report analysis. The Group will continue sharing success stories and identifying entry points to scale up good practices and promising initiatives through GB related processes across workstreams.

Recognising the importance of the Grand Bargain as a key mechanism that brings together humanitarian partners, United Nations, INGOs, NNGOs and Red Cross Societies, the Friends of Gender would like to put forward the following recommendations:

Overall recommendations

- **Enhanced accountability and increased investments in GEEWG through signatory and workstream initiatives:** Prioritise the focus on GEEWG as a matter of effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of humanitarian action through investments and commitments to close existing capacity and financing gaps. Further strengthen institutional commitments and investments in GEEWG, building on the progress and promising practices identified through the GB signatory reports and the collective analysis at WS level, ensuring intersectional and cross-cutting lenses are taken into consideration.
- **Increased collaboration and dialogue across workstreams:** Deepen dialogue and coordination amongst workstream co-conveners and GB signatories on joint initiatives to further advance gender outcomes at the level of specific workstreams. Strengthen dialogue across different workstreams on what success would look like for advancing the GEWE agenda through the Grand Bargain in close partnership with the Facilitation Group and FoG group.
- **Greater transparency:** Further enhance the quality of GEEWG reporting, including intent and type of reporting across different workstreams, institutional systems and tools to monitor and report progress against GEEWG related commitments and targets. This reporting should both draw on and support GEWE reporting through other established mechanisms, showing clear linkages to IASC mechanisms and processes, including the IASC Gender Policy and Accountability Framework as well as the Gender and Age Marker.
- The **Humanitarian-Development Nexus** and **Enhanced Quality Funding** workstreams have been identified as particularly relevant and with great potential for further progress.

Workstream specific recommendations and opportunities

- **Localisation:** Further enhance GB signatory commitment to support local women-led and women’s rights organisations’ substantive and effective engagement in humanitarian coordination mechanisms at country level; as well as in decision-making processes across the humanitarian programming cycle through increased investments in their institutional capacity development.
- **Cash programming:** Scale up operationalisation of gender responsive cash and voucher assistance following up on key commitments and strategic entry points identified during the Washington consultation on gender and cash (April 2019) and the Rome Cash workshop (May 2019).
- **Harmonised needs assessments:** The workstream has placed the collection and analysis of SADD at the centre of its new initiatives (ethos, quality assessment criteria). The FoG group calls upon

signatories to further link these commitments to the operationalisation of the recently adopted guidance on HNOs and HRPs.