

Thank you.

I am honoured to join you today and thank the Eminent Person and Facilitation Group for the opportunity to address the annual meeting as a representative of the Friends of Gender group for the first time. My name is Fatima Shehu Imam, I am the Executive Director of REBHI, the Rehabilitation, Empowerment and Better Health Initiative, joining today from Maiduguri in Borno State, Nigeria.

As many of you know, the Friends of Gender group was created in September 2016 to advance gender equality considerations at workstream level and to identify gender equality and women and girls empowerment outcomes in the context of the Grand Bargain. In 2018, the Friends of Gender expanded to include non-signatories of the Grand Bargain, specifically women-led organizations such as my own, and the work of the Friends of Gender was re-centred to promote women's voice and leadership and gender-transformative humanitarian action. As noted in the Annual Independent Report, perhaps the biggest contribution of the Friends of Gender is bringing the Grand Bargain to the field.

The collaboration that has characterized the Grand Bargain is widely recognized as a key factor in progress made to date. As the Friends of Gender we bring the experience of what such collaboration can achieve. As we acknowledge failings and integrate learning into the next iteration of the Grand Bargain, let us also embrace success. We know that strategic leadership is crucial to supporting and steering signatories towards the overarching goals of the Grand Bargain. The Friends of Gender are proud to bring this leadership to our role on the Facilitation Group.

I applaud the leadership of the former Eminent Person and Facilitation Group members in course-correcting and taking efforts towards addressing the structural gaps on gender within the Grand Bargain. I thank you for embracing the commitment of local women actors from the field to gender transformative change in the humanitarian ecosystem. We will channel our collective efforts towards priorities relevant to all signatories with the potential for system-wide transformative impact of the humanitarian ecosystem. And ensure that the needs and priorities of women and girls are fully integrated in to Grand Bargain actions going forward with focus on country level operationalization. Localization, participation revolution and quality funding for local women's organizations and gender equality as well as GBV provide important entry points for the advancement of gender equality in crisis settings.

As a member of the Facilitation Group, the Friends of Gender commits to developing a robust monitoring framework for the Grand Bargain 2.0 with gender indicators integrated throughout the four pillars. Further, we commit to tracking and reporting on the collective commitments to advance gender and women's voice and leadership in global, and especially in country level, initiatives and processes through the Grand Bargain. As noted in the Annual Independent Report, perhaps the biggest contribution of the Friends of Gender has been bringing the Grand Bargain to the field. As we re-centred our own work to focus on meaningful change at field level three years ago, we eagerly bring our strategic leadership, experience and other resources to the Facilitation Group as we collaborate to achieve the same in the Grand Bargain 2.0. We would also like to recommend specific provisions for the participation of women's organizations and networks in National Reference Group while ensuring linkages with existing country level coordination mechanisms on gender and GBV to draw on country level expertise, partnerships, and priorities.

Humanitarian agencies and networks come to the Grand Bargain with explicit commitments made under the auspices of the Agenda for Humanity, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Good Humanitarian Donorship, and a number of other standards that obligate us to integrate gender equality and women and girls empowerment outcomes in our work. As has been said by many of the Principal speakers yesterday, we cannot reduce the needs of women and girls in humanitarian emergencies without including their voices and leadership in all sectors and structures of the humanitarian system. Today, I am proud to raise my voice to encourage all stakeholders to embrace the potential for system-wide transformative impact in the humanitarian ecosystem.

As has been highlighted by many of the Principal speakers yesterday, we cannot reduce the needs of women and girls in humanitarian emergencies without including their voices and leadership in all sectors and structures of the humanitarian system, including global and country level decision making spaces, including Grand Bargain. I would like to encourage all

stakeholders to scale up strategic action including funding for the advancement of gender equality in crisis and humanitarian settings.