

Comments made by CARE International

As a leading humanitarian organization working with women and girls in emergencies around the world, CARE has seen first-hand both the specific needs of women and girls and the important role women play in emergency response. As the UN convenes to determine how the international community can better respond to the global refugee crisis, we need to make sure that women and girls are not left behind.

SDG 5.5 commits us to “Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.” This also applies in refugee and humanitarian contexts. In these situations, we see women stepping up, acting as first responders, taking up new, active roles. Through our work, we’ve seen opportunities to support changes in gender dynamics in these contexts. Yet, in certain contexts, women refugees cannot form civil society organizations, or they face regulatory and legal barriers to being able to work and access services.

We are concerned that the current text of the Outcome Document addresses women and girls as vulnerable. Women and girls are not automatically vulnerable. Certain characteristics of the contexts in which they find themselves cause vulnerabilities. We need sound analysis of what those causes are, for all segments of populations.

When we look specifically at the text, the Outcome Document does not identify refugee-led CSOs, including women-led refugee CSOs, as 'stakeholders'. The text of the Global Compact does not identify women refugee-led CSOs as service providers.

CARE calls on Member States to ensure that the Outcome Document and Global Compact contain strong language about:

- supporting women as agents of change,
- supporting their rights to organize and register civil society organizations, and
- supporting their participation in decision-making processes at all levels.

In addition, we recognize that the Outcome Document and Global Compact lack a clear path forward to implement the elements of both documents. Therefore, we also call on Member States to commit to concluding an operational framework for the Global Framework for Responsibility Sharing of Refugees within 12 months.