

Plenary Announcement/World Humanitarian Summit
Statement by Sarah Costa, Executive Director, Women's Refugee Commission

The Women's Refugee Commission is proud to be part of the collective effort at this Summit to catalyze action to achieve gender equality.

Refugee women and girls must be central to this effort, including those who are often especially marginalized, such as adolescent girls, refugee women and girls with disabilities and sexual and gender minorities.

In too many humanitarian situations, displaced women and girls are precisely the ones who are left behind, at risk of violence and exploitation, excluded from decision making processes, unable to realize their potential. This must change. And we must put that change into motion here in Istanbul.

The WRC has made a number of commitments that reflect what we hear every day from refugee women and girls: support us to be safe, healthy and self-reliant.

For example, the WRC is fully committed to the multi-stakeholder *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies*. This initiative has the potential to transform humanitarian practice on gender-based violence by ensuring that the prevention of and response to GBV is prioritized from the very start of every emergency.

Refugee women and girls need to be safe. They also need to be healthy to build the futures they want and deserve. That's why the WRC is committed to implementation of the Every Woman Every Child Everywhere Initiative. It is why we will remain indefatigable in our advocacy on the provision of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services in every humanitarian response.

The WRC will support self-reliance in a number of ways. We are committed to providing technical support to practitioners on cash based interventions so they are gender responsive, maximize protection and minimize risk. And we will support greater, more effective investment in adolescent girls by improving partners' capacity to link girls to essential services and build their capacity to fully participate in the decision making processes that affect their lives.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not bring to colleagues' attention the ongoing fight for equal nationality rights. The WRC, as the seat of the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights, will continue its advocacy with national women's organizations and others for reform of gender discriminatory nationality laws that have such negative impacts on affected women and their families.

It's been a privilege to share a sampling of the WRC's commitments with you. I will close with the hope and the expectation that this Summit will indeed serve as that catalyst for action to

achieve gender equality. Each of us, through our own organizational commitments, can help translate the vision into reality for all women and girls affected by crises.