

UNITED NATIONS RELEASES \$25 MILLION FOR WOMEN-LED PROJECTS BATTLING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

(New York, 25 November 2020): The United Nations humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock has released \$25 million from the UN's emergency fund to support women-led organizations that prevent and respond to gender-based violence in humanitarian settings.

The funding has gone to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women who have been asked to channel at least 30 percent of it to organizations run by women that prevent violence against women and girls, and help victims and survivors with access to medical care, family planning, legal advice, safe spaces, mental health services and counselling.

“The COVID-19 pandemic helped reveal the full extent of gender inequality while creating a set of circumstances that threaten to reverse the limited progress that has been made,” said Mark Lowcock, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

“Everyone who is serious about gender equality and women's rights must speak up. Then those with the means to do so need to put their money where their mouth is. The needs of women and girls in humanitarian settings continues to be overlooked and underfunded.

“It's a smart investment and it's the right thing to do. We can only successfully find a way out of this pandemic if we bring everyone with us.”

UNFPA will receive \$17 million and \$8 million will go to UN Women. They will now decide where and how the money will be spent and have been asked to channel at least 30 per cent of the funding through women-led organizations working on gender-based violence.

“It's time to say ‘Enough’ to gender-based violence and to prioritize the rights and needs of women and girls in humanitarian crises,” said Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund.

“This grant will bring transformative change to women and girls, including the women-led organizations we work with on the ground. In 2019, nearly 40% of UNFPA's humanitarian funding went to national and local partners. We look forward to making an even bigger impact together with life-saving interventions to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and advance sexual and reproductive health.”

The announcement came at the start of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, an international campaign to challenge violence against women and girls which runs each year from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day.

“The high levels of gender-based violence that women and girls experience, especially in countries that are in crisis and in need of humanitarian assistance, remains one of the greatest injustices in our world,” said UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

“Putting these resources into the hands of women-led organizations that respond to gender based violence in humanitarian settings is essential to address the needs of survivors and to strengthen systems to prevent and promote accountability, so that we finally end this scourge.”

The funding comes from the United Nations’ Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), an emergency fund that offers one of the fastest and most effective ways to help people affected by crises. Since it was established in 2005, the fund has provided close to \$7 billion for life-saving humanitarian action that has helped hundreds of millions of people across more than 100 countries and territories. This would have not been possible without generous and consistent donor support.

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