UNRWA has submitted the inputs to the last round of reporting for the UN system-wide action plan on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Agency, along with the rest of the UN system, is preparing for UN-SWAP 2.0 framework reporting that will be launched in 2018.

UNRWA Gender Highlights of 2017

As the New Year commences, UNRWA looks back at an eventful year marked by the many ways in which the Agency continued and increased its commitment to advance gender equality. Here are some of the highlights:

February– By becoming a member of the ‘Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies’, the Agency further underlined its commitment to address all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) both during times of relative peace and acute emergencies.

March– In cooperation with the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) New York, UNDSS Jordan and UNICEF, UNRWA Department for Security and Risk Management (DSRM) conducted the ‘Women Security Awareness’ training of trainers, where UNRWA staff, among others, were trained on the specific needs of female UN staff in the context of safety and security.

To mark International Women’s Day, UNRWA launched the Agency’s first Gender Champion award to recognize UNRWA staff from all fields who have contributed to advancing gender equality. Six gender champions were selected based on their leadership and contribution to gender equality. On the same day, the booklet and film series “In Their Own Words” were launched, which is a compilation of Palestinian women’s stories.

July– The GBV Prevention Framework was finalized and rolled out. Specific, evidence-based roadmaps to operationalize the framework were developed.

September– UNRWA received funds for another year of the Building Safety Programme, which is focused on enhancing the Agency’s capacity on GBV in emergencies. It is under the umbrella of the ‘Safe from the Start’ initiative supported by the US.

October– The Gender Equality Strategy was disseminated. Discussions on gender marking have also begun as part of the implementation of the strategy.

UNRWA adopted the Human Resources (HR) Gender Parity Action Plan geared towards the implementation of UNRWA Gender Equality Strategy and the Secretary-General’s system-wide strategy on gender parity.

November/December– UNRWA participated in the 16-day Campaign promoting the global call to end violence against women. Various activities were carried out across UNRWA field offices under the slogan “Five Roads and One Destination: End Gender-Based Violence—UNRWA Implements Context-Based Roadmaps to Prevent GBV in all its Areas of Operations”. Additionally, a panel discussion was held that addressed the recent regional changes in legal frameworks related to GBV.

UNRWA looks forward to the new year and to continue its efforts. Among others, this year’s main activities include a training of trainers on GBV and the finalisation of an e-learning course on GBV-in-emergencies.
A Travel Writer on a Mission
Daragh Ghanem, a travel writer and young Jordanian columnist, wants to make a difference by sharing her experiences of travelling solo online. Being a female Arab woman holding a Jordanian passport, her stories address multiple issues. She shares her experiences of travelling solo as a woman, highlighting the gendered character of travelling by pointing to the vulnerability that comes with it. As she speaks about the difficulties she faces as a traveler from an “othered” culture, it is the highly privileged nature of travelling she emphasizes. Last but not least, she hopes to challenge stereotypes about Arab women and to create a community of Arab female travelers.

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and microfinance.

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