



EVENT SERIES :

Women and Girls in Conflict, Crisis and Disaster

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland is inviting you to its event

Women and Girls in the context of Disasters and Climate Change— Agents for Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

Opening remarks by

Manuel Bessler

Ambassador, Head of Swiss Humanitarian Aid, FDFA

Followed by a panel discussion among

Kirsi Madi

Director of the United Nations Office for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)

Nahla Haidar

Member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Margaret Arnold

Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank

Bridget K. Burns

Co-Director Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO)

moderated by

Elisabeth Gilgen, Deputy Chief of Staff, Humanitarian Aid and Swiss Corps for Humanitarian Aid

Date: Wednesday, 8th March 2017

Time: 16.30 – 18.00

Place: Kreuz Hotel, Bern

Language: English

Catering: Catering will be provided.

Only limited seats available. Please confirm your participation by e-mail to chancengleichheit@eda.admin.ch by 6 March 2017. Admission is free on presentation of this invitation.

Content of the discussion

Women, girls, men and boys are affected differently by climate change and natural disasters and have different resources and capacities to prepare, respond to and recover from disaster. Due to their social roles and existing gender-inequalities, women and girls are more likely to die in natural disasters than men and boys. At the same time, gender-based violence increases as a consequence of natural disasters, negatively impacting women and girls' physical, social and psychological wellbeing and preventing them from participating equally in political, social and economic life. Women are also more vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change; given the fact that they are more dependent on local natural resources threatened by climate change and that they constitute the majority of the world's poor.

At the same time, women are not only victims of climate change but also actors of change through their specific knowledge and expertise on adaptation, disaster reduction and climate change mitigation. The panelists will discuss the added-value of promoting women and girls as agents for disaster risk reduction and identify practical ways and means to fully incorporate the knowledge and experience of women in risk reduction planning and decision-making.

Information on the event

The event is part of an EVENT SERIES on "Women and Girls in Conflict, Crisis and Disaster" launched in 2014 by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). It aims to promote a wider dialogue on gender issues in conflict, crises and disaster, with a view to inform, sensitize and raise awareness on the priorities and work of the FDFA in this area. It targets a broad audience, including staff within the Swiss administration, politicians and parliamentarians, civil society, embassy representatives, academia and students. This edition of the EVENT SERIES is jointly organized by the General Secretariat and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Panelists

Nahla Haidar is a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women since 2013 (CEDAW). After her degrees in Law and in Sociology, she became active in the field of Human Rights through the Arab Lawyers Union, the special committee on women and Shari'a, and through the Arab Organization for Human Rights. She pursued a career within the UN, namely as chief of a Unit with UNOCHA, with a special emphasis on protection issues and women in conflict, as a Deputy Executive Director for UNOPS, and as deputy focal point for the advancement of Women at the United Nations Office in Geneva. She is currently the Chair of the CEDAW Working Group on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction and climate change.

Kirsi Madi is the Director of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). She holds an M.A. in Political Science with specialization in International Relations and Social Anthropology. Before joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, and subsequently the United Nations, she was part of a research project in Calcutta, India, on the question of political mobilization of the urban poor. Prior to her current position, she worked more than twenty years for UNICEF, during which time she was appointed, in 2010, as UNICEF Deputy Regional Director for the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, overseeing and supporting 22 UNICEF offices across the region.

Bridgets K. Burns is the Co-Director of Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO). She obtained a Master from the London School of Economics in Gender, Development and Globalization, where the focus of her research was on eco-feminism, strategic essentialism and its deployment in literature and policy. Prior to WEDO, she worked at LEAD International, coordinating a global network of environmental leaders conducting leadership training. She currently specializes in policy advocacy, research and mobilization around the linkages between gender equality, women's rights and climate change.

Margaret Arnold is a Senior Social Development Specialist with the World Bank, specializing in the social dimensions of climate change, disaster risk management, and community-based and gender-sensitive approaches to risk management. She has been with the World Bank since 1995, and has worked on urban development and post-conflict reconstructions to disaster risk management. She was part of a two-person team that established the World Bank's first unit focused on natural disaster risk management in 1998, and is credited with facilitating the Bank's recognition of disaster risk reduction as a development priority.