**ITALY**



***MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION***

***inter-ministerial committee for human rights***

**Italy’s contribution to the thematic report on *Women’s and girls’ sexual and reproductive health and rights in situations of crisis***

*August 28, 2020*

**ITALY’S CONTRIBUTION**

To the attention of

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Further to your query, Italian Authorities are in a position to provide the following remarks, **for your information only**.

**Introduction**

In translating relevant international obligations and commitments, on December 15, 2016 Italy adopted the third National Action Plan in accordance with UNSCR 1325(2000), 2016-2020, which for the first time has been equipped with specific earmarked funding. Consisting of 7 Objectives and 44 Actions and related indicators, this Plan was drafted with relevant CSOs by an inter-ministerial and integrated approach.

Taking note of existing NAPs, especially at the EU level, the third NAP focuses on: technical cooperation projects undertaken by the Italian Development Cooperation in key geographic areas; women’s meaningful participation in all relevant processes, and newly-introduced standards. From a substantial law standpoint, its scope has been broadened in order to better reflect the growing “inter-relatedness of human rights”, both internationally and domestically. Along these lines, relevant *commitments* have been confirmed and/or enhanced. The aim is to support existing and/or to-be-launched initiatives with an inclusive, transparent, integrated and participatory approach, besides involving, for instance, the UNHCR with regard to the situation of women asylum-seekers and refugees in Italy (www.cidu.esteri.it).

Gender equality, empowerment and promotion of women's rights, the fight against gender-based violence, food security and support for women in rural areas, are the main focus of the 2019 planning of the Italian Cooperation, in line with the commitments undertaken by Italy at an international level to achieving SDG No.5, as well as within the Core Responsibility 3 of the Agenda for Humanity and the Call to Action on gender-based violence in emergency contexts.

In 2019, the Italian Cooperation funded numerous new relevant projects aimed at both development and humanitarian aid as carried out by international organizations, partner governments and civil society organizations, including local ones.

In continuity with the previous years, also in 2019 the Italian Cooperation continued to support United Nations mechanisms and bodies mainly focused on gender equality and women's empowerment (i.e. UNWOMEN, UNFPA, and "Joint Program on Female Genital Mutilation” managed by UNICEF / UNFPA).

**Turning to specific issues**

Qs.1 & 8

Against this background, it is worthy of mention that the new sectorial Guidelines of the Italian Cooperation, the approval of which is ongoing, underline the importance of maternal and reproductive health and rights in humanitarian contexts.

The Italian humanitarian aid, aimed at protecting human life in case of natural or man-made disaster, recognises that women and men are affected by crises in different ways and have different capacities to prepare for and respond to emergencies, due to their different exposure to vulnerabilities and risks.

Humanitarian crises have no neutral impacts and can expose women and girls to specific risks - such as sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking, sexual exploitation, early marriage (CEFM), and pregnancies. In line with the “do no harm principle”, the Italian humanitarian action follows a gender-based approach to make sure that programmes do not have negative effects on women, exposing them to greater risks.

Italy also recognises the crucial role of women in building peace processes in conflict and post-conflict contexts and in promoting the resilience of the most fragile communities. At the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul (2016), Italy made significant commitments to fight gender-based violence in emergencies and to guarantee the sexual, reproductive and maternal health of women living in crisis affected countries.

At the WHS (2016), Italy committed to:

1. Strengthen efforts in the areas of maternal and child health, emergency obstetrics, pre and post-natal care, access to information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, emergency contraceptive services, family planning, sanitation, medical and psychological services for survivors of gender and sexual violence (SGBV - Sexual and Gender Based Violence), strengthening local health systems and training of all operators (WHS, Round Table n.5, Core Commitment 2);
2. Implement the commitments made in the Call to Action on Protection from GBV in emergencies, i.e. conduct advocacy actions in multilateral fora to promote the inclusion of Call to Action considerations, publish new Guidelines on GBV and Gender Based Violence in Humanitarian Aid, strengthen GBV services (WHS, Round Table 5, Core Commitment 2).

In 2019, Italy funded several programmes to support women in crisis situation.

In Somalia, Italy contributed to the "United Nations Trust Fund for Somalia (UN-MPTF) for the financing of the Country Programme UNFPA 2018-2020" (AID 012082/01/1 e 012082/02/2; total value € 3,080,000), to ensure the provision of essential quality health services for all people in Somalia and to reduce maternal and child mortality.

In Afghanistan, Italy funded for the second year in a row the UNFPA project "Response to immediate gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual & reproductive health-SRH needs of returnees, IDPs and host communities in Nimroz and Herat provinces of Afghanistan".  (AID 011216/03/0 – total value € 800,000) aimed at improving access to reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention and response services for 93,000 women and girls from returnees, IDPs and host communities in affected populations concentrated in Nimroz and Herat provinces.

In Syria, Italy funded the second phase of the programme "UNDP/UNFPA - Support to services against gender violence and livelihoods activities for families affected by the Syrian crisis in the Governorate of Raqqa - PHASE II" (AID 011672/02/1 - € 1,000.000) aimed at supporting the empowerment of women, girls and boys through a multisectoral perspective, including reproductive health, protection and response to gender-based violence (GBV) and providing livelihood opportunities.

In Libya, Italy funded the UNFPA "Programme to improve access to protection and reproductive health services for people affected by the conflict in Tripoli" (AID 011965/01/5 - € 500,000) aiming at improving access to sexual and reproductive health services and gender-based violence prevention and response services for the population affected by the conflict in Tripoli.

Moreover, Italy funded the project "Contribution to UN WOMEN for the Oasis - "Eid bi Eid" programme in support of women's resilience and empowerment phase III" (AID 011232/02/3 - € 1.000.000) in Jordan, with the aim of protecting women from sexual violence and strengthening women's resilience, targeting both Syrian refugees and the host community.

In Iraq, € 400,000 have been allocated for life-saving prevention, mitigation and SGBV response interventions, implemented by UNICEF, targeting refugees and displaced people hosted in camps in Iraq (project "Increasing access to adequate WASH and SGBV services for Iraqis returning from Al Hol camp", AID 011955/01/6).

**Conclusion**

Italian Authorities take this opportunity to reiterate their firm willingness to continue effective cooperation with all UN Special Procedures.

Once additional information is made available, we will promptly share it.