The Invest-In-Women Global Summit

Scaling Up Financing for Local Women’s Organizations Responding to Crisis & Building Peace

Held on the Sidelines of the UNSC Open Debate on WPS
25 and 26 October 2023, UNHQ – New York

Concept Note

Background

Humanitarian crises and threats to peace are more common than ever before. Emerging and protracted conflicts, the rise of authoritarian regimes and unprecedented emergencies are posing grave and urgent threats to global security, sustainable development and fundamental human rights. The number of people forcibly displaced due to conflict, natural disaster, persecution and human rights violations is the highest on record in history. Threats to the fundamental rights of women, LGBTQI+ communities and other marginalized groups are on the rise with conflicts and emergencies exacerbated by the global climate crisis, food insecurity and violent extremism. It is against this backdrop that the United Nations Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) is calling on the international community to take bold and decisive action to support local, transformative, scalable, women-led solutions in fragile settings to build more peaceful, equal and resilient societies – while advancing local implementation of the WPS-HA agenda and marshalling collective action to achieve SDGs 5 and 16 as both enablers and prerequisites to deliver on the wider 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Women civil society leaders have long been working at the forefront of local efforts to create innovative solutions that transform lives. Local women’s organizations are deeply integrated into their communities, making them trusted authorities who are best placed to reach and work alongside the most marginalized populations. Women civil society leaders have the access, expertise, strategic partnerships and legitimacy to change the power dynamics and rebuild societies based on equality and inclusion post-conflict, effectively improve the quality and reach of humanitarian aid, respond to sexual and gender-based violence, prevent conflict and violent extremism, and so much more. Despite this, financing for local women’s organizations in crisis settings remains needlessly low and is rapidly backsliding. The share of global development assistance for fragile or conflict-affected countries that ever reaches local women’s organizations still stands at less than one per cent of total bilateral aid.

Building on its legacy of innovation and impact since its establishment in 2016 – and together with its government, civil society and UN partners - WPHF is harnessing the results and amplifying the voices of local women’s organizations to justify the urgent global imperative for UN Member States and global philanthropic leaders to scale up investment in and accelerate flexible programmatic and institutional financing for women civil society leaders who are yielding remarkable dividends towards a more peaceful, inclusive and gender-equal world. Based on a funding gap analysis and in line with the UN Secretary General’s call to action for women’s organizations and human rights defenders in crisis situations, WPHF aims to mobilize USD 300 Million in new financing for local women’s groups in fragile settings by the end of 2025, accelerating the reach and support to more than 3,500 local women’s organizations working in conflict and crisis countries to directly transform the lives of approximately 13.5 million people worldwide.

The WPHF Invest-In-Women Global Summit will convene governments, civil society leaders, UN entities, celebrities, philanthropists and the private sector at UN Headquarters on the sidelines of the UNSC Open Debate on Women Peace and Security in October 2023. This multi-stakeholder summit will constitute a milestone moment and opportunity for UN Members States to concretely deliver on their WPS
commitments ahead of the UNSC Open Debate through the unveiling and promotion of ambitious new financial commitments to directly invest in the transformational power of women on the front lines. The summit will also provide an opportunity for stakeholders to further engage in a series of dynamic global dialogues highlighting the need to counter the underinvestment in WPS-HA, celebrate the governments leading the charge, and to further articulate WPHF’s strategic action plans to provide more adequate, predictable and sustained resources for local women-led and women rights civil society organizations building peace and responding to crisis in fragile settings across the globe.

Objectives

1. Secure new, quality multi-year, financial commitments from UN Member States and private sector entities to scale up and consolidate flexible, predictable financing for WPHF-supported local women-led and women’s rights civil society organizations in fragile settings worldwide.

2. Facilitate a platform for global dialogues – led by civil society – for diverse stakeholders to underscore the global imperative to support women civil society leaders working in conflict and crisis settings and exchange on priorities and strategies to counter underinvestment WPS-HA.

Through this Summit, WPHF will present its strategic action plan and deliver on its mandate to provide more adequate, predictable and sustained resources for local women-led and women rights civil society organizations building peace and responding to crisis in fragile settings across the globe. This occasion will serve as a platform to magnify the influence and contributions of local women’s civil society leaders, including peacebuilders, humanitarians, and women human rights defenders, to further build the case and strengthen their calls on the International Community and Member States to accelerate financial and political commitments to local women led and women’s rights civil society building peace and responding to crisis.

Resource Mobilization Target

- 300 Million USD raised over the period of 2023-2025 to support local civil society organizations in conflict and crisis affected settings worldwide.

Summit Format

The Invest-In-Women Global Summit will be held at UNHQ in New York on the sidelines of the UNSC Open Debate on WPS on 25 and 26 Oct 2023 and consist of two key events:

1. High-Level Pledging Event & Cocktail Reception
   *(Delegates Dining Room at UN Headquarters, 25 Oct 2023 / 7-9pm EST)*
   - Opening Remarks
   - Pledging Segment
   - Closing Remarks

2. Interactive Civil Society Dialogues: Turning Commitments and USD 300M into Action
   *(UNHQ, 26 Oct 2023 / 10 am - 1 pm EST)*
   - Interactive Dialogue 1: Unlocking the Power of Women Holding the Keys to Conflict Prevention
   - Interactive Dialogue 2: Women’s Strategic Solutions in Humanitarian Settings: Beyond Service Delivery to Sustainable Peace & Development
The event will be livestreamed on UN Web TV and across WPHF social media channels. Panelists and moderators will include representatives from government donors, UN and INGO board members, private sector representatives and WPHF CSO partners.

Conference Follow Up

The Chair of the WPHF Board and the Secretariat will release a press statement announcing the outcome of the Summit to communicate the level of commitment reached, counting and widely disseminating all contributions made to the Fund in 2023 to date.

About WPHF

The United Nations Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) is a UN pooled funding mechanism accelerating programmatic and institutional support for local women’s civil society leaders working in crisis settings worldwide. WPHF is supporting the capacity, amplifying the voices and advocating for local women peacebuilders, humanitarians and women human rights defenders. WPHF is addressing critical financing gaps for local women-led and women’s rights organizations on the front lines, fostering coalition building, and breaking the silos across humanitarian-development peace financing. Since its launch in 2016, WPHF has funded over 1000 local and grassroots civil society organizations in 32 countries around the world, with close to half of its CSO partners receiving UN funding for the first time. From 2016 to 2022, WPHF mobilized over USD 136 million to support women civil society leaders and their local organizations working to prevent conflict, respond to crises, end sexual and gender-based violence, build back better from COVID-19, and forge lasting peace in their communities.