

CSM Side event on Women and Conflict @ CFS 2017

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1) Women are more vulnerable to food insecurity/malnutrition in crises

- a) **Communities under crises are more vulnerable to food insecurity** :The mean prevalence of undernourishment in protracted crisis situations is 39%, compared to 15% on average in the rest of the developing world. The number of undernourished people in protracted crises countries is three times as high than in other developing countries. – sofi 2015
- b) **Women are at greater risk of malnutrition than men and more girls die of malnutrition than boys.** Women require two and a half percent more dietary iron than men (e.g. 50% of women in Afghanistan have iron deficiency)
- c) **Women favor their families and children over themselves and they are disproportionately affected in times of food shortage**
- d) **Women need more protein when pregnant and lactating and deficiency increases likelihoods of child impairment-** Malnutrition for pregnant and lactating mothers can set up a cycle of deprivation that increases the likelihood of child impairment - low birth weight, child mortality, serious disease, poor classroom performance and low work productivity. Eg. In Yemen, 17 million people are food insecure, more than 3 million pregnant and nursing women and children under 5 need support to prevent or cure malnutrition.
- e) **Women's vulnerability to abuse and exploitation usually increases during conflict**
 1. Difficult to commute to school/fields/work –

Examples:Pregnant Women Giving birth at check points in Palestine:

Halla Shoaibi of University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in the United States estimates that in the period she studied (2000-2007):

- 10 percent of pregnant Palestinian women were delayed at checkpoints while travelling to hospital to give birth.
- One result has been a dramatic increase in the number of home births, with women preferring to avoid road trips while in labor for fear of not being able to reach the hospital in time.
- 69 babies were born at checkpoints during those seven years 2000- 2007. Thirty-five babies and five of the mothers died, an outcome which she considered to amount to a crime against humanity.

2. Rapid escalation of violence/domestic physical and emotional abuse –

- Sudden Unemployment of men who usually provide for, support and protect their family causes increased frustration / depression/anxiety
- Refugees often live in overcrowded refugee camps, or with multiple families sharing squalid apartments nearby which also increases frustration and humiliation

f) Sudden increase in economic and social burden on women– In conflict situations there is an increase in the # of women headed households .

- Many wives of prisoners/ disabled husbands/ martyrs need to provide for their families.
- Girls who lose their parents become mothers to their siblings at a very young age 15 and sometimes younger.

Examples:

- Almost 20% of the total Palestinian population in the occupied Palestinian territories has been arrested. **With the majority of these detainees being men, about 40% of male Palestinians in the occupied territories have been arrested**
- 4,772 political prisoners serving terms in Israeli jails. Of these, 552 were sentenced to life terms.[3] 560 of them held under administrative detention without having been charged.
- There are 11% female headed households in Palestine

g) Gender affects the incidence of food insecurity among Palestinian households. In

Palestine 1/4 of male-headed households are food insecure, compared to 1/3 of female-headed households.

- Household profiling indicates that some household characteristics — such as being female-headed, being a refugee, residing in camps and having members with disabilities or chronic illnesses — are clearly related to an increased likelihood of food insecurity

2)Women’s Role in crises and conflict

Women are often disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of food insecurity, on the other hand, they have the potential to play a major role in feeding the future.

a) Women contribute largely to agricultural production (although often unrecognized) through tending to crops and animals

1. Women perform 75% of cultivation activities in Yemen

2. Roughly one third of all women in the occupied Palestinian Territories are employed by the agricultural sector .It is an important source of income for hundreds of thousands of Palestinian families, and provides the families with fruits and vegetables. **There is an increase in the participation of women in urban agriculture.**
 3. The FAO estimates that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 percent, this could reduce the level of hunger by 150 million people
- b) **Women manage household consumption** and food preparation and are more likely to reinvest their money on food, education, and healthcare. However
1. Women have limited access to information about nutrition.
 2. They need access and control over resources to improve food security, such as income, land, equipment, financial services and training.
 3. Have problems in low wages and land rights
 4. The requirement of recruiting male workers to carry out physically exerting agricultural activities, increasing the cost of production
 5. Many women have considerably less access than men to critical information on weather alerts and cropping patterns, affecting their capacity to respond effectively to climate variability.

3)What to do – Main Recommendations

- Encourage women to join specialized agricultural cooperatives /form women workers/farmers unions or social movements to defend rights
- Empower and bring women closer to decision-making processes on all issues not only women's rights. Women and women's rights cannot be put in separate silos and women should be able to voice opinions on political, economic and social systems that affect their families and communities.
- Women's needs and methods to obtain needs and rights are not identical globally. Women should be supported to voice their context-specific issues, without dictation and far from one size-fits-all approach.
- Disaggregate data effectively to increase female representation in most protracted crises food security analysis -> keep away from unitary models of research
- Design a gender-sensitive response that meets the needs of the population's most vulnerable
 - Women farmers – train in processing - Facilitate access of women to markets of input production and final product markets
 - Rehabilitation in crises / urban agriculture -> source of nutrition

- Paying particular attention to nutritional needs during the first 1,000 days after conception, of pregnant and lactating women, women of reproductive age and adolescent girls
- Design and deliver food security and nutrition policies in ways that minimize gender based violence
- Educate women about their rights and how to claim them
- Encourage legal aid institutions to provide legal counseling services
- Implementation of CFS FFA in Protracted Crises and relevant UN Conventions. Womens rights in protracted crisis situations has been recognized by (CEDAW), particularly article 30: which provides guidance on the protection, respect and fulfillment of women's human rights in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict contexts, including situations of occupation.
- We cannot promote and improve land rights and access to land for women or women's participation in agriculture while simultaneously allowing premeditated attacks on agricultural fields and agricultural production sites
 - Examples
 - In Yemen, agricultural cooperative credit banks, agricultural charities, and governmental agricultural buildings have all been destroyed
 - In Gaza , the occupation imposes sanctions on food production inputs / and treats 30% of cultivable land as non-access zones . In the West bank - 60% of the area is considered area C which is controlled by Israel militarily and administratively. Apart from land confiscation/ Checkpoints / blocked markets/ water resources appropriated/trees uprooted

Essentially we need to intensify efforts to stop wars, conflict and occupation, and bring just and durable peace.