

INTER-AGENCY FIELD MANUAL ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

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PREFACE

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is a human right and, like all other human rights, applies to refugees, internally displaced persons, and others living in humanitarian settings. To realize this right, affected populations must have access to comprehensive SRH information and services so they are free to make informed choices about their health and well-being.

The provision of comprehensive and high-quality SRH services requires a multi-sectoral integrated approach. Personnel from sectors such as protection, health, nutrition, education, and community service all have an important role in planning and delivering SRH services. Needs are best met through involving affected communities in every phase of action: from assessing needs to designing programs, from launching and maintaining programs to evaluating their impact.

The *Inter-Agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings* (IAFM) is the result of a collaborative and consultative process engaging hundreds of representatives from United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations that make up the Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises (IAWG). Based on guidelines issued by normative bodies, particularly those of the World Health Organization, the 2018 IAFM incorporates specific evidence from, or examples about, the application and adaptation of global SRH or human rights standards in humanitarian settings. The 2018 IAFM reflects the wide application of the manual's principles and technical content beyond refugee situations, extending its use into diverse crises, including conflict zones and natural disasters. The IAFM continues to be the authoritative source for SRH in crises; the *Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response* incorporates the Minimum Initial Service Package for SRH - Chapter 3 in the 2018 IAFM - as a minimum standard of care in humanitarian response.

The global political community has also made progress, especially in addressing the gravity of sexual violence in armed conflict. The United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889 on Women, Peace, and Security affirm the unique needs, perspectives, and contributions of women and girls in conflict settings. The Security Council has recognized sexual and reproductive health, with Resolution 1889 explicitly referencing the need to ensure women and girls' access to SRH services and reproductive rights to achieve better socioeconomic conditions in post-conflict situations.

Unfortunately, large populations are still forced to spend decades away from their homes in refugee camps, internally displaced person settlements, or urban settings unfamiliar to them, due to ongoing conflict or as a result of a natural disaster. The average length of displacement for refugees is 17 years. Many persons affected by these chronic emergencies are highly vulnerable to life-threatening sexual and reproductive ill-health, posing serious challenges to efforts to achieve global benchmarks, including the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2018 IAFM aims to improve the health and well-being of affected populations from relief through the transition to development, while fostering preparedness and high-quality services that ensure the maximum participation of affected communities.

Nearly 25 years have passed since the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development recognized reproductive health as a human right. As members of the humanitarian community, we have a collective responsibility to uphold and realize the right to SRH for people in all humanitarian settings.

