

High-Level Roundtable

Building Trust through Inclusive Humanitarian Financing for Women and Girls in Conflict and Displacement

Side-event, the UN General Assembly, September 2026, UN Headquarters, NY

Date: 24 September 2026

Time & Location: 11:00 – 12:30 (EDT) at the UN Women Headquarters, New York and online

Co-hosted by: Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), UN Women, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the Making Aid Work project (University of Birmingham).

Introduction: This high-level roundtable examines how innovative faith-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches to financing humanitarian aid can improve outcomes for women and girls in conflict and displacement. Amid a system-wide reset in the humanitarian system and increasing fiscal constraints, where women-led organisations remain systemically underfunded, there is a shift in focus towards building trust-based, equitable partnerships among humanitarian actors, women-led organisations, and philanthropic and Islamic finance institutions. Islamic social finance, estimated in the trillions of dollars globally, reflects the ethical principles that ground humanitarian action – dignity, alleviation of suffering, justice, and inclusion – positioning it as an integral, yet underexplored, resource. The policy dialogue convened by ICRC and Making Aid Work initiative in October 2025 identified cultural diplomacy, trust, and increased collaboration as vital pathways for engaging with Islamic philanthropy for women.

Aim: This roundtable will advance international conversation on gender-responsive and faith-sensitive humanitarian financing, highlighting diverse approaches and collaborations that successfully supported and empowered displaced women and girls. It aims to examine how partnerships between humanitarian and faith-sensitive financing models can improve outcomes for displaced women and girls by expanding flexible, trust-based support to local responders, strengthening local leadership, and enhancing gender-responsive support.

Background: Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by conflict and displacement, experiencing increased risks of poverty, violence, abuse and exploitation, shaped by intersecting characteristics such as age, race, and religion. Local, women-led organisations are crucial frontline responders, providing critical aid and community support, yet remain systemically excluded from decision-making and underfunded, receiving less than 1% of direct humanitarian funding. Faith-sensitive philanthropy and Islamic social finance mechanisms are well placed to address this funding gap. Organisations that deliver Islamic philanthropic funds and mechanisms are often culturally proximate to affected communities,

making them well positioned to address the diverse needs of women and girls. Strengthening partnerships between faith-sensitive financing and humanitarian organisations, and ensuring women and girls, and women-led organisations, are placed at the heart of humanitarian financing, is essential for effective, sustainable, and accountable humanitarian responses.

Objectives

- **Advance global dialogue on innovative, faith-sensitive financing mechanisms** – including those rooted in Islamic philanthropy – that can empower and enhance the well-being and resilience of displaced women and girls.
- **Provide a platform for frontline women-led organisations** to share the financing and partnership barriers they experience and their recommendations for change.
- **Support cultural diplomacy to address trust deficits and affirm shared values** across diverse donors, philanthropists, humanitarian organisations and communities.
- **Provide recommendations** for continued collaboration and trust-building that strengthens faith- and gender-responsive humanitarian financing.

Participants: The event will bring together diplomats, grassroots women's organisations, humanitarian practitioners and policymakers, donors and philanthropists, and leading academics in humanitarian and gender studies.

Moderator: **Professor Azza Karam**. President and CEO of Lead Integrity and former Secretary General at Religions for Peace and founder of the UN Multi-Faith Advisory Council.

Expert Speaker: **Dr Sandra Pertek**. Lead Researcher for the Making Aid Work for Displaced Women project at the University of Birmingham.

Keynote Speakers: **Dr. Issa Faye**, Director General, Global Practice and Partnerships, IsDB, **Lisa Doughten**, OCHA Director of Financing and Outreach Division, a **women-led organisation** and **UN Women**.

Panellists: Deputy Director General, **QFFD** [TBC]; **Alaa Murabit**, UN High-Level Commissioner on Health, Employment & Economic Growth [TBC]; Manager, Fragility and Resilience Department, **IsDB** [TBC], representative from a **women-led organisation** [TBC],

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Registration:

Please register your attendance by 22 September (12:00 EDT) to ensure access to the venue. Register [here](#)



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