

A black and white photograph of a fishing boat on a beach. The boat is partially visible on the left side of the frame, with its large net hanging over the side. The background shows a sandy beach and the ocean.

# **SGBV in humanitarian contexts – a new priority topic of Humanitarian Aid**

**Gender & CHR Network F2F  
1 June 2016**

# The new priority theme – what does it mean?

- SGBV as Humanitarian Aid's (HA's) contribution to strategic goal 7 of new federal dispatch 2017-2020
- SGBV one of four priority themes of HA: DRR, WASH, Protection, SGBV
- So far HA's engagement on SGBV rather ad hoc
- Operational concept for new priority theme under development
- Main implementation by field offices and through multilateral department
- Creation of the new specialized group protection within the SHA

# What is Gender-Based Violence (GBV):



## Definition

“Gender-based violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females”

## Examples

- Sexual violence, slavery and rape
- Domestic/intimate partner violence
- Harmful traditional practices (forced/early marriage, female-genital mutilation, honour crimes)
- Forced or coerced prostitution, transactional sex, sexual exploitation by aid workers
- Sexual harassment

## Victims and perpetrators

Victims are predominantly women and girls – but also men and boys. In most cases, perpetrators are male.

# Why is GBV an issue for humanitarians?

- **GBV often increases during and after crisis** (conflict and natural disasters) and is **a life-saving issue!**
- **Acts of GBV may violate human rights and/or international humanitarian law** and even constitute a war crime / crime against humanity / genocide; they may also constitute crimes under domestic law – **GBV is therefore an important protection issue!**
- **Serious impact on the victim's health and wellbeing** (injury/chronic illness or permanent physical damage, pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease/HIV, male impotence, psychological disorders/trauma, stigma, ostracisms, criminal persecution, risk of honour killings) – GBV creates specific needs and vulnerabilities
- **Serious impact on the community:** trauma for witnesses/family members, climate of fear/insecurity, tension within the family or with the community, difficult situation for children born out of rape, GBV as a reason to flee
- **Efficiency and effectiveness:** a lacking GBV/security lens may negatively affect the desired outcomes in the sectors we work in (i.e. due to fear women refuse to use the latrines we built)



# Why does it occur?

- Pre-existing gender inequalities / GBV – GBV increases during crisis
- Disruption of law and order and impunity
- Weakening of family and community (protection) structure
- Displacement and increase in female-headed households, crowded IDP/refugee accommodation
- Loss of self-esteem and masculinity by men / unemployment & boredom, drugs and alcoholism
- Increased stress level and aggression / violence; increase in criminality
- Socio-economic vulnerability and physical insecurity favouring early/forced marriage, prostitution, transactional sex, sexual exploitation
- Use of sexual violence as a weapon of war

# Invisibility of GBV



Don't wait until you hear about cases of GBV – always work on the assumption that it is happening!

# Are there differences in humanitarian GBV work to a development context?



- Increase of GBV during and after an emergency
- Access to services may be more difficult / services / justice system break down
- Different / new actors coming into play
- Sexual violence as a weapon of war
- Short-term nature of humanitarian interventions (difficult to address underlying gender inequalities, building sustainable local structures to prevent and respond to GBV)
- Limited access to beneficiaries, displacement...

# Relevant laws, policies

- CEDAW (discrimination), International humanitarian law (several provisions and rape/other forms of sexual violence prohibited under customary law), International Criminal Law (rape and sexual violence of comparable gravity) – all ratified by Switzerland
- FDFA Gender Strategy (under development)
- Federal Dispatch 2017-2020
- Swiss National Action Plan on Security Council Resolution 1325 (2013-2016)
- SDC Gender Strategy (2003) & Strategic lines for gender equality 2015-2018

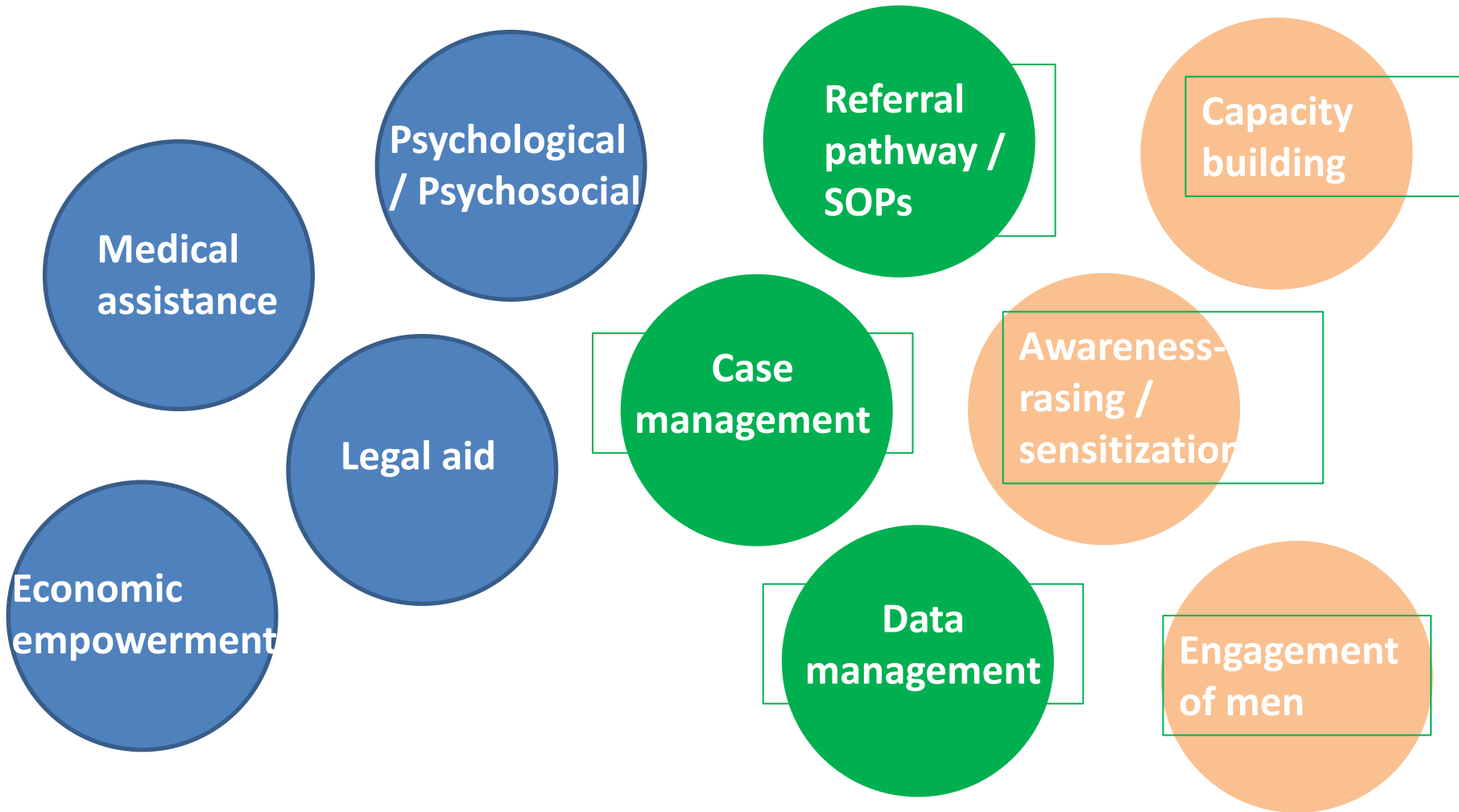






- Launched in 2011 by UK
- November 2013 Conference: Call to Action Communique: protection from GBV from onset of emergency (signed by Switzerland; pledges; annual reporting)
- 2015: Launch of five-year Call to Action Roadmap (partnership & commitments)
- Functioning: Steering committee, stakeholder groups, annual reporting
- Now main international initiative in relation to GBV in emergencies

# How do we work on GBV: GBV specific programming



Relevant guidance: UNFPA Minimum Standards GBV prevention and response

# How do we work on GBV: integrating GBV in humanitarian action

## WASH

- Safe location of WASH facilities
- Private, well-lit and lockable bathing spaces and toilets
- Young girls collecting water

## Food sec.

- Distance/safety of route travelled to distribution point
- Access to cooking fuel
- Risk of sexual exploitation

## Protection

- Assess GBV-related protection concerns: displacement, unsafe routes to work, school, proximity to war zone, etc.

## Health

Address obstacles in accessing GBV services (stigma, lack of privacy, language..)  
Gender-balanced staff

## Shelter

- Minimize overcrowding
- Location of shelter
- Locks and lighting
- Cost of rent

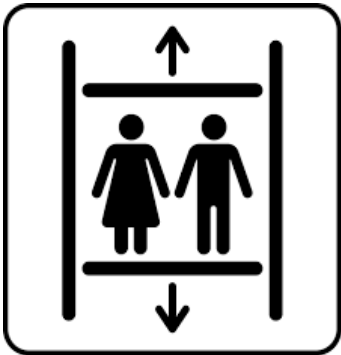


Relevant guidance: new IASC GBV guidelines

# Working on GBV at all levels

## GBV Engagement

International



National

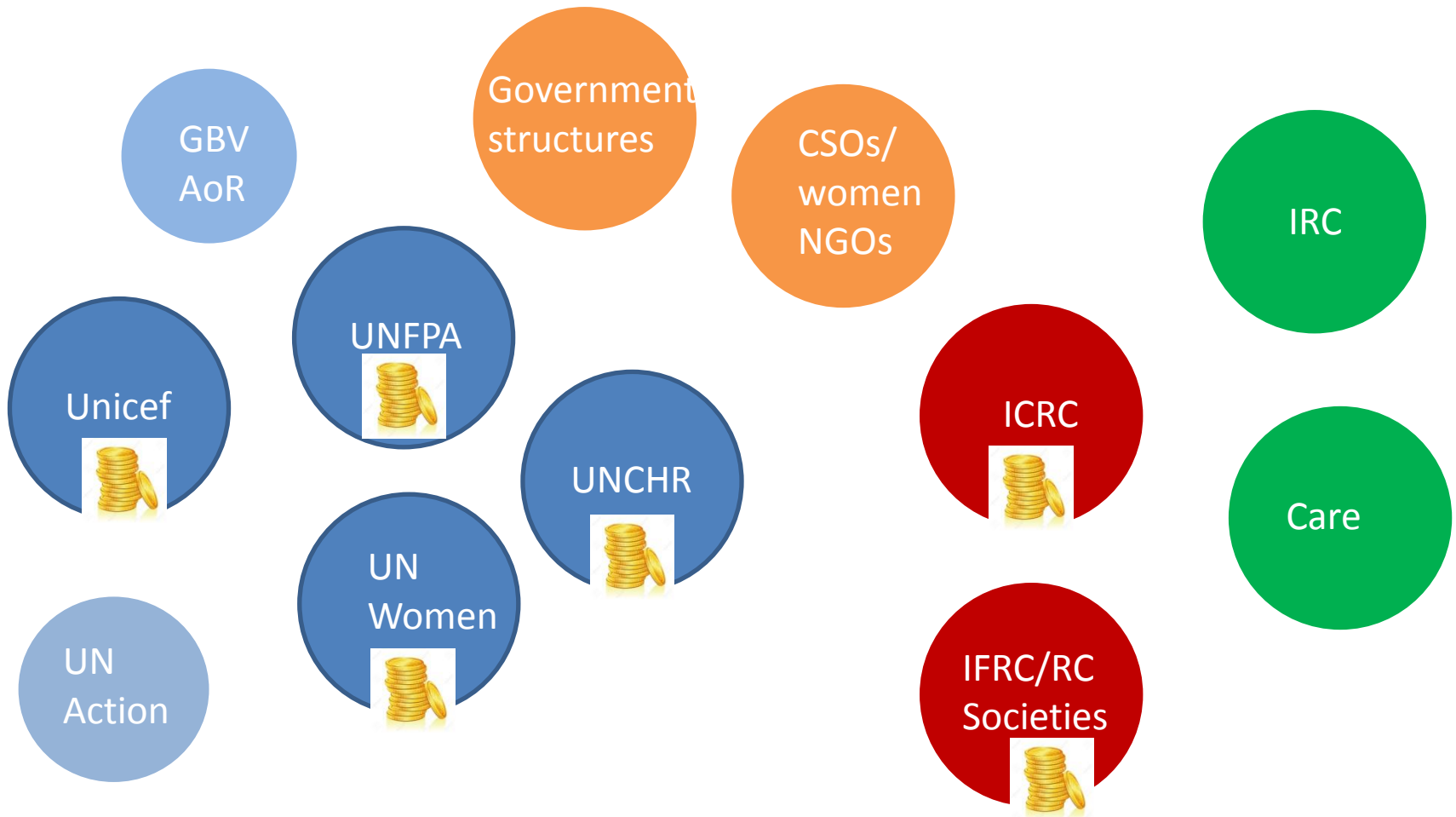
**GBV  
Programmes**

**Coordination**

**Advocacy &  
policy dialog**

**Cooperation  
with key  
partner  
organizations**

# Main (potential) partners



# Challenges

- Limited funding and interest
- Lacking capacity
- Limited accountability
- GBV is a cross-sectoral issue

