

Aide-Memoire on Integrating Gender Equality in the UN Plan of Action on DRR for Resilience

Background: The UN Plan of Action on DRR for Resilience (UNPoA) was endorsed by CEB in April 2016. To hold the UN system and related organizations (UN) accountable to its implementation, the UN DRR Focal Point Group (FPG) was tasked with the development of a Results Based Analytical Framework (RBAF). With Results and Outputs already defined, the group is currently working on development of targets and baselines for these.

The UN system recognizes that ensuring proper attention to gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEWE) is an opportunity to improve the relevance and the effectiveness of its DRR efforts. The UNPoA and its established Results, Outputs, and related indicators refer to promotion of gender-disaggregated data, specifically in UN CCAs and national disaster loss databases, as effective means to promote GEWE. However, there is ample room to make use of the UNPoA to further strengthen the accountability of the UN to commitments and recommendations on GEWE in DRR, set out - amongst others - in the Sendai Framework for DRR (SFDRR) and Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Resolution 56/2 and 58/2 on *Gender Equality and the empowerment of women in Natural Disasters*.

To facilitate this process, UN Women and UNFPA have developed an Aide-Memoire to assist the DRR focal point group (FPG) and its six task teams to further mainstream GEWE in the finalization of the development of targets and baseline of the RBAF and more broadly, to guide the FPG in the development and implementation of interventions of the UNPoA in a gender responsive manner.

Key issues: There are a number of gender dimensions and mainstreaming considerations, which are key to achieving the results of the UNPoA.

Resources: In order to ensure commitments to gender equality and empowerment of women are translated into reality, partners need to allocate adequate resources to gender mainstreaming and to specifically targeting the needs of women of different age groups and institute tracking and monitoring systems to monitor those resources.

Capacity: The capacity of partners, including through dedicated technical expertise, to understand and address gender dynamics and the differential risks of crisis and the capacitation of women and girls themselves to be actors for sustainable solutions, are prerequisites for success across the task teams.

Participation: Women and girls as well as other vulnerable groups must have meaningful, dignified and equal say in and access to opportunities, services and support to advance and reach their potential and aspirations. Since women and girls consistently face structural barriers and increased risks to doing so in humanitarian contexts, this requires specific efforts and investment.

Well-being and health: In order to meaningfully empower women and girls it is important to promote and support gender-sensitive DRR management and actions at all levels, including their specific needs and health, ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning information and services, and prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence.

Leadership: Women and women's organizations should have equal access to and say in decision-making. Since women and women's organizations often face barriers to doing so, this requires collective attention in eliminating the barriers to leadership.

Accountability: As PoA partners hold themselves accountable for delivering on its commitments, this accountability must extend to ensuring that their efforts work equally for different gender and age groups. Information on progress towards achieving commitments on gender equality contained within the SFDRR should be publicly available.

Evidence and Data: Wherever possible, all assessments, planning, targets and baselines should be based on sex and age-disaggregated data to identify the differing and specific needs, of women, girls, men and boys, as well as to measure the how they will benefit from all planned activities. Giving explicit attention to the differing situation of women and men, through gender-analysis, rather than generic assumptions on the conditions for affected people, will uncover important disparities as well as the vulnerabilities and risk exposure of women and men of all ages.

Key issues in selected Task Teams: The above issues manifest in specific ways in the different task teams. For example:

Task team 1 & 5 – Risk-informed 2030 agenda: Gender inequalities constrain the influence and control of women and girls over decisions governing their lives as well as their access to resources such as finance, food, agricultural inputs, land and property, technologies, education, health, in particular sexual and reproductive health, protection from sexual and gender based violence, secure housing and employment. Women are more likely to be disproportionately affected and exposed to risks, loss of livelihoods and gender-based violence during and in the aftermath of disasters. DRR efforts will be less effective and efficient without a clear knowledge and evidence-based understanding of the gender dimensions of risks. A risk informed 2030 agenda therefore requires systematic collection and use of sex and age disaggregated data (SADD) and gender analysis must be a prioritized part of assessments. **This can be achieved by promoting gender responsive and harmonized information management, statistical methodologies and processes as well as by using existing data to its full potential to close existing knowledge gaps.**

Task Team 2 – Monitoring and Implementation of SFDRR: The importance of SADD for risk informed decision-making was highlighted in the SFDRR. The UN is well placed to support countries in developing systems for monitoring progress on SFDRR provisions on promoting gender equality, the empowerment of women as well as women's leadership , their universal access to sexual and reproductive health services including for family planning services, and prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence, , as these commitments are not explicit in the current monitoring set-up. Cooperation and partnerships with gender equality advocates in the monitoring of SFDRR is an obvious opportunity to improve accountability to gender equality commitments.

Task Team 3 – Support the integration of GEWE in to DRR strategies and plans: Institutionalizing gender equality commitments into DRR strategies, plans, organizational arrangements and capacity development, is a key step towards accountability and implementation. This can be achieved through dedicated technical expertise and capacity support for gender responsive planning and by encouraging and facilitating the engagement of women organizations in DRR planning and strategy development. This requires collective attention to eliminating the barriers of engagement faced by women and women's organizations. Eliminating fundamental barriers to women empowerment also requires that women and girls are protected

from any form of violence including sexual and gender-based violence, and can access quality SRH and family planning services Recognizing the leadership capacity of women as active agents and contributors and supporting their leadership role in DRR programme planning and implementation is not only a rights issue but vital for community resilience as a whole.

Task Team 4 - Support to early warning, preparedness, response and recovery: recognizing the gender dimensions of resilience building and the central role of women in promoting community resilience and sustainable solutions will enhance the effectiveness of DRR. Women and girls as well as other vulnerable groups must have a meaningful, dignified and equal say in – as well as access to - the opportunities, services and support they require across all preparedness, response and recovery interventions. Since women and girls consistently face structural barriers and increased risks to doing so in disaster contexts, this requires dedicated, specific efforts and investment, including to improving and maintaining universal access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Key actions include promoting their access to information -including early warning-systems, training, education and capacity building - taking into account the different education and information level of women, girls, men and boys. Implementing gender responsive information and communications systems, based on the needs and capacities of at risk women will improve the access of women to disaster risk information and ultimately save lives.

Also minimizing protection risks in line with the do-no harm principle and commitments to prevention and response to gender-based violence must be systematically considered across preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

Ensuring women’s legal entitlements, compensation, cash transfers, insurance, social security, credit, employment are important aspects to facilitate recovery. Improving gender mainstreaming in damages and loss assessments would have a significant impact on women’s recovery from disasters. Currently, damage and losses are usually recorded in terms of productive resources which tend to be owned by men, whilst recordings of material loss at the household level, hides important differences in losses between women and men. Furthermore, losses in the informal sector and subsistence farming often predominated by women - are often not recorded, as is the case for losses related to reproductive health and rights of women, all leading to a substantial undervaluation of the impact on and opportunity cost for women.

Task Team 6 – Prioritizing DRR: In order to ensure that commitments to gender equality in DRR are translated into reality, UN organizations need to allocate adequate resources to gender mainstreaming and well as targeted interventions addressing women’s needs and mitigating gender inequalities of risks. It requires giving the issue visibility in organizational DRR capacity, plans, strategies and budgets and systematically advocating the issue with partners. UN Women and UNFPA continue to stand ready to support the FPG in its efforts to strengthen gender mainstreaming and women empowerment in the UN work on DRR.