

Reducing disaster risk through a gender-responsive midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

A side event at the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women on the theme “Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes”



Organized by UNDRR and co-sponsored the Permanent Missions of Australia, Indonesia, Norway, and Peru as Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Disaster Risk Reduction, the Permanent Missions of Bangladesh and Japan, UNEP, UNFPA, UN Women, and WMO

Virtual, Wednesday 16 March 2022, 08:00-10:00 EST

Registration: https://undrr.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Ru58H-a3Rietg97WmX2QTg

Background

The expected outcome of the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#) is ‘*The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.*’¹ The theme of the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women provides an opportunity to review the ways in which promoting and supporting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in disaster risk reduction can help accelerate progress to achieve this outcome, and explore opportunities to harness synergies between disaster risk reduction, climate change and environmental efforts.

Given the ongoing midterm review of the Sendai Framework, which commenced in October 2021 and will conclude with a high-level event on the 18 and 19 May 2023, CSW66 provides an opportune moment to consider the ways in which gender equality can help reduce disaster risk, disaster risk reduction can support gender equality, and gender and disaster risk reduction stakeholders can effectively collaborate to achieve these mutually reinforcing aims.

The impact of gender norms, roles and relations on people’s lives within a given culture and society is critical to understanding and reducing disaster risk. The Sendai Framework acknowledges both the specific vulnerabilities that women face in disasters due to pervasive gender inequality that exists across all societies, and recognizes the indispensable role of women, including grassroots women in risk reduction efforts. Effective disaster risk reduction requires meaningful and diverse participation, engagement and leadership, through an inclusive and accessible, all-of-society approach. Climate change and environmental degradation are increasing disaster risk, yet national legal and policy

¹ Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, para 16, <https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030>

frameworks do not yet provide a cohesive basis for gender-responsive governance that fulfils the rights and needs of women and girls and ensures women's participation in decision-making.²

At the same time, disaster risk constrains our collective progress towards gender equality. Due to the systemic nature of risk, disasters have inequitable and cascading impacts across the Sustainable Development Goals which can last for years after the initial event. The 2021 UN Joint Study on Gender Equality and Women's Leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction *Beyond vulnerability to gender equality and women's empowerment and leadership in disaster risk reduction: Critical actions for the United Nations System*³ found that inadequate attention has been given to the ways in which gender inequality and disaster risk buttress each other, or how this synergy can most effectively be utilized to achieve gender equality and reduce disaster risk.

In line with the all-of-society approach outlined in the Sendai Framework, there is active engagement from gender and women's stakeholders, yet understanding and addressing the underlying drivers of gender-based disaster risk is not currently sufficiently prioritized. The UNFCCC processes and the Paris Agreement have gradually accrued a gender equality framework, yet there is no similar mechanism for the Sendai Framework.⁴ The establishment of a gender action plan (or equivalent) to support implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction would be a potential starting point to ensure integrated and complementary approaches with the global gender action plans agreed for the biodiversity and climate change conventions and could help to bring together CEDAW Recommendation 37 on Gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, the SDGs and the Sendai Framework in a structured and action-oriented way.⁵

The midterm review of the Sendai Framework which is currently underway aims to assess progress on the integration of disaster risk reduction into policies, programmes and investments at all levels, identify good practice, gaps and challenges, and approaches to accelerate the path to achieving the goal of the Sendai Framework and its seven global targets by 2030.⁶ The process is designed to assist countries in making risk-informed and prevention-oriented policy decisions, and gender equality and women's empowerment must be fundamental to these decision.⁷ This CSW66 side event provides an opportunity to advance gender-responsive implementation of the Sendai Framework as an integral component of the collective 2030 Agenda.

Objectives of the event

- Inform gender actors about the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and highlight different opportunities for engagement.
- Identify key gender equality and women's empowerment recommendations and commitments that will help to accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework recognising the strong links between climate change, environment and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.

² Report of the Secretary-General, *Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes*, 2021

³ UN Joint Study on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and Leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction, [Beyond vulnerability to gender equality and women's empowerment and leadership in disaster risk reduction: Critical Actions for the United Nations System](#), 2021

⁴ UN Joint Study on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and Leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction, [Beyond vulnerability to gender equality and women's empowerment and leadership in disaster risk reduction: Critical Actions for the United Nations System](#), 2021

⁵ This recommendation came out of UN Joint Study on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and Leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction, [Beyond vulnerability to gender equality and women's empowerment and leadership in disaster risk reduction: Critical Actions for the United Nations System](#), 2021

⁶ UN Gender Assembly resolution 75/216, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3896586?ln=en>

⁷ The Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 National Consultations, Review and Reporting Guidance for UN Member States, December 2021

- Share and unpack the recommendations from the UN Joint Study on Gender Equality and Women’s Leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction *Beyond vulnerability to gender equality and women’s empowerment and leadership in disaster risk reduction: Critical actions for the United Nations System* to support a gender-responsive midterm review of the Sendai Framework.
- Explore the possibility of establishing a specific gender work planning mechanism to support the implementation of the Sendai Framework to 2030, potentially a gender action plan similar to the climate change and environment treaty plans.

The event will be moderated by Elizabeth Puranam from Al Jazeera

<p>08:00-08:45</p>	<p>Opening segment and overview of the midterm review of the Sendai Framework Statements from high-level representatives from event co-sponsors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Setting the scene: Ms. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of UNDRR ● Welcome remarks: Ms. Bjørg Sandkjær, State Secretary for International Development, Norway ● His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the General Assembly (video message) ● Ambassador Ishikane Kimihiro, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations ● Ambassador Rabab Fatima, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations ● Ms Diene Keita, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA ● Ms. Åsa Regnér, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women
<p>08:45-09:25</p>	<p>Panel discussion The panelists discuss the priorities of the Sendai Framework from a gender equality and women’s empowerment perspective.</p> <p>The panel will be moderated by Professor Virginia Murray, a public health doctor who is Head of Global Disaster Risk Reduction (GDRR) for UK Health Security Agency.</p> <p>Priority 1 Understanding Disaster Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls, Shifting the Power Coalition, Fiji <p>Priority 2: Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ahmadul Haque, Director, Cyclone Preparedness Programme, Bangladesh <p>Priority 3: Investing in DRR for Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Liane Schalatek, Associate Director, Washington Office, Heinrich Böll Stiftung <p>Priority 4: Enhancing preparedness and BBB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yvonne Aki-Sawyer, Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone
<p>09:25-09:55</p>	<p>Discussion Questions and interventions from the floor will be welcome during the discussion.</p>
<p>9:55-10:00</p>	<p>Concluding remarks and closing</p>