



SUGGESTED COMMITMENTS FOR ADDRESSING GENDER GAPS IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE

Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

Why this paper?

This disaster risk reduction (DRR) support paper prepared by UN Women, suggests commitments for closing the gender gaps in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience in preparation for the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 66).

Why close the gender gaps?

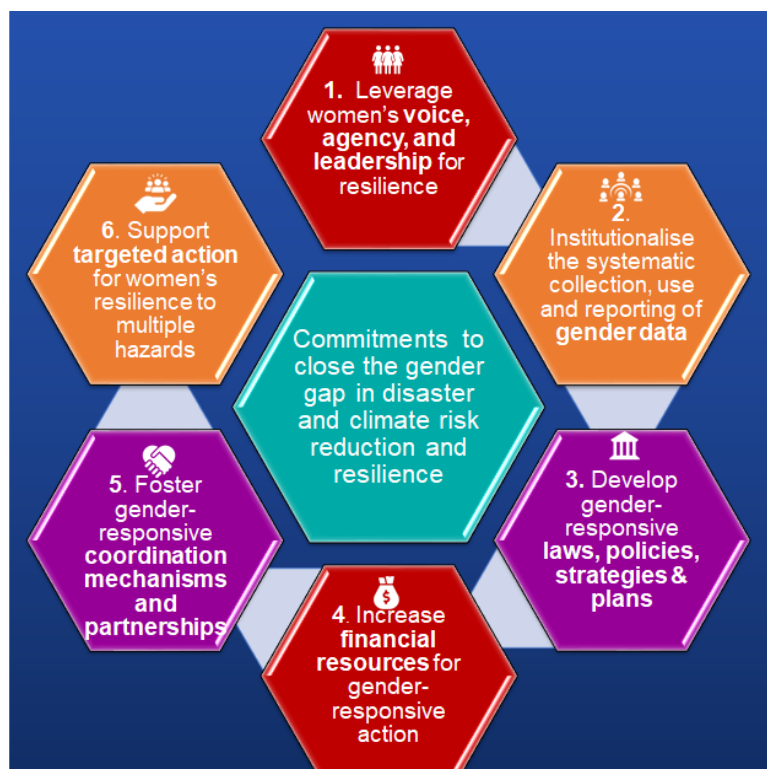
Disasters are not experienced uniformly by everyone in society. Across the board, from mortality, to education, health, violence, livelihoods, and nutrition; women are negatively and disproportionately impacted. This was confirmed in a [study](#) by UN Women and UNICEF, which identifies women and children as the most vulnerable to disasters and threats combined with uneven levels of resilience and capacity to recover.

Gender roles and inequalities in society contribute to women's disproportionate disaster and climate risks and impacts. These include unequal access to productive resources, finance, technology, knowledge, and decision making processes, which undermine women's resilience.

Proposed commitments

1. Leverage **women's voice, agency, and leadership** for resilience and address the structural barriers, capacity gaps, and discriminatory attitudes that restrict their meaningful participation.
2. Institutionalise the systematic collection, use and reporting of **gender data** including sex, age, and disability data at all levels.
3. Develop **gender-responsive frameworks** (laws, policies, strategies, and plans) founded on the needs and priorities of women in all their diversity.

4. Increase **financial resources** for gender equality and women's empowerment and leadership in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience.
5. Foster **gender-responsive coordination mechanisms** and partnerships to secure more inclusive decision-making.
6. Support **targeted action** for increasing women's resilience to multiple hazards focusing on their access to gender-responsive early warning systems; resources, assets, services and infrastructure that build resilience; and securing women's resilient livelihoods and businesses.





Key Messages

1. PROMOTE WOMEN'S TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP



- **Women and women's organisations are critical agents of change** in disaster and climate risk reduction, yet their voice, agency, and capacities remain unleveraged.
- According to the UNDP and UN Women [Global Gender Response Tracker](#), women made up **less than one quarter** of all national-level COVID-19 committees and despite comprising nearly 70% of frontline health and social workers, comprise only **25% of legislators**.
- **When women are empowered to take on leadership roles**, to safely and meaningfully participate in decision making, and to collectively influence and advocate for gender-responsive governance mechanisms, and processes; then underlying social norms and inequalities driving unequal risk can be challenged, and women's skills, knowledge, resources, experience, and expertise leveraged.



ACTION

- *Address the structural barriers, capacity gaps, discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes that continue to restrict women's leadership and participation in climate and disaster risk reduction and resilience decision-making.*
- *Empower women as leaders and aim for 50% of women in decision-making roles for resilience.*

2. INSTITUTIONALISE THE SYSTEMATIC COLLECTION, USE & REPORTING OF GENDER DATA



- Only **7 countries** shared disaggregated data on disaster mortality under the Sendai Framework Monitor for 2019, and **3 countries** shared disaggregated data on the number of people whose livelihoods were destroyed or disrupted.
- Data disaggregated by sex, age, and disability (SADDD) help unpack **gendered risk** and **differentiated impacts** of disasters and interventions.
- [Qualitative gender data](#), further help identify social and cultural norms and roles, which alongside gender analysis, are essential for **understanding the root causes of vulnerability** and ensuring **inclusive and equitable** risk reduction and resilience processes and outcomes for women in all their diversity.



ACTION

Commit to systematic collection, use, and reporting of gender data at all levels to: i) build intersectional understanding of the root causes of vulnerability; ii) inform risk and needs assessments, policy and programme development; and iii) to monitor progress towards addressing the gender inequalities of disaster and climate risk.

3. DEVELOP GENDER-RESPONSIVE LAWS, POLICIES, STRATEGIES, AND PLANS



- The [Women's Resilience to Disasters \(WRD\) Policy Tracker](#) shows that only **11 countries** have risk reduction/risk management frameworks inclusive of all Sendai Framework high-risk groups; **53 countries** include gender commitments in their policies, laws, and plans; and only **7 countries** highlight that women and/or women's organisations have meaningfully participated in framework development.
- **No single law or policy has been identified** that fulfils all of the following: i) meaningfully engages women and women's organisations during development; ii) comprehensively includes gender inclusion and intersectionality in its principles, priorities, and actionable responsibilities (with clear mechanisms and budgets for implementation); iii) links to existing gender equality frameworks; and iv) is effectively implemented with monitoring and evaluation against gender equality targets and indicators.



ACTION

Ensure disaster and climate laws and policies are gender-responsive and provide a solid foundation, mandate, and institutional arrangements for gender equality, women's empowerment, and leadership in risk reduction and resilience.

4. INCREASE RESOURCES FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE ACTION



- There is a lack of **stable funding** for inclusive, gender-responsive risk reduction. Reliance on often short term external funding sources constrains resources and capacities, for example of national disaster risk management agencies, to integrate gender equality and social inclusion meaningfully and systematically.
- Resources need to be secured for **gender-responsive budgeting** and to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion into resilience building.
- Applying a **gender lens to budgeting** and securing a sufficient proportion of the national budget for promoting gender-responsive risk reduction, will allow countries to plan long-term strategies and invest in capacity development. This will ensure policy commitments and interventions for gender equality and women's empowerment are implemented and translate into outcomes.
- There are significant gaps in women's access to **climate finance**. Only an estimated 0.01% of worldwide funding addresses both climate change and women's rights. To empower those left behind, climate financing must be accessible to, and support women's grassroots organisations to build resilience to climate and disaster risk.



ACTION

Increase resources and ensure stable, long term funding for gender-responsive risk reduction and resilience, including increasing accessibility of resources for women's organisations.

5. FOSTER GENDER-RESPONSIVE COORDINATION MECHANISMS AND PARTNERSHIPS



- **Collaboration and cooperation** between all actors involved in resilience building is critical so as to bridge traditional silos and mainstream gender equality and social inclusion in risk reduction and resilience.
- **Research** highlights a lack of coordination between stakeholders as one of the main challenges to inclusive disaster and climate risk reduction. This is attributed to actors following their own agenda and using their own protocols and monitoring mechanisms. This results in complex realities being overlooked by actors working in silos, rather than more holistic approaches based on collaboration and grounded in local context.
- **Bringing non-traditional DRR actors to the table** including ministries for women, and partnering with grassroots women's organisations and organisations representing women with disabilities, will challenge social norms that inhibit progress towards gender-responsive action, and help address the needs and priorities of women in all their diversity.



Institutionalise multi-stakeholder cooperation at all levels, increase resources for the participation of women's organisations in coordination mechanisms, and broker partnerships in order to facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration, which incorporates diverse views and experiences, leading to more inclusion in risk reduction planning and activities.

6. SUPPORT TARGETED ACTION TO INCREASE WOMEN'S RESILIENCE



- **Research highlights significant gaps in women's access to:** i) gender-responsive **early warning systems**; ii) **finance** (e.g. risk financing, insurance, social protection); iii) **services** including gender targeted (e.g. sexual and reproductive health, maternal health services); iv) **resilient infrastructure** (e.g. shelter, markets); v) **resources and assets**; and vi) **resilient livelihoods and businesses**. These are fundamental for increasing women's resilience to future disasters and threats.
- **Notably, women have unequal access to productive** resources such as land, credit, agricultural inputs, technology, and training services. For example, less than 20 percent of landholders worldwide are women. The gender digital divide can further significantly increase disaster vulnerability alongside unequal care burdens (women provide 76 percent of all unpaid care work).
- **A 2020 UN Women study** highlights a gap in **proactive resilience building** interventions before a disaster hits as opposed to investing for example in livelihood support during disaster recovery.



Support targeted pro-active interventions to strengthen women's resilience to multiple hazards, and establish a national monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track implementation of commitments and actions to inclusive risk reduction and for evaluating progress.

Find out [more](#) or contact us: wrd@unwomen.org