



# “The Role of Access to Digital Technology in Building Women’s, Young Women’s and Girls’ Resilience to Disasters”

Concept Note

February 15, 2023 – 10.00-11.00 AM EST / 4.00-5.00 PM CET  
(virtual, through [Zoom](#))

Organised by UN Women’s Disaster Risk Reduction team and the Youth Leaders and Young Professionals (YLYP) Network

## Background

In March 2022, SG António Guterres announced that “the United Nations would spearhead new action to ensure that every person on Earth is protected by early warning systems within five years. He tasked the WMO to lead this effort and present an action plan at COP27 to achieve the goal.” The [Early Warnings for All Executive Action Plan 2023-2027](#) calls for an estimated new targeted investments of USD 3.1 Billion over five years to advance the [four Multi Hazard Early Warning System \(MHEWS\) pillars](#) from a scientific & technical, policy and financial perspective. The plan calls for an adequate framework to integrate a gender perspective in technological evolution, to address the negative impacts of new technologies on women and girls, and to ensure that technology and innovation advance gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls across all other sectors.

Women’s full, equal access to early warning information and leadership in early warning communication is crucial for improved early preparation and risk reduction of communities during extreme weather events and health emergencies; enhanced community protection services and referral pathways; and supporting the realisation of women’s rights and gender equality before and after disasters. While emerging technologies have the potential to contribute to building women’s disaster and climate resilience as well as a large number of development goals, it is important to bear in mind that their benefits are not always equal, and that there are sometimes negative gendered impacts to their use. It is critical to ensure that their design, development and deployment actually benefit women contributing to their economic empowerment, safety and agency, rather than exacerbating inequalities, biases and gender-based violence.

This gendered asymmetry in vulnerability to disaster risk is rooted primarily in geographic, economic, social, educational/informational and political power imbalances in societies. These factors translate into women having lower levels of access to economic resources in general and in particular, lower levels of access to education, means and information that would allow them to read and act upon disaster warnings. People of different genders may have different levels of access to formal and informal dissemination channels, have different communication preferences (shaped by gender norms), and face different challenges in accessing and being able to act upon early warning.<sup>1</sup> In many cases, women do not receive hazard warnings because their behaviour patterns or information preferences are not taken into account, or because they are not targeted directly due to assumptions of equal access to public space.<sup>2</sup>

Access to digital technology can contribute to evaluating and collecting data on the impact and situations of gendered risks, interests, and needs through easier data collection and dissemination.

<sup>1</sup>Aguilar, L., Granat, M. and Owren, C., Roots for the future: The landscape and way forward on gender and climate change (Washington, D.C.: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Global Gender and Climate Alliance, 2015); Brown et al., (2019) Gender Transformative Early Warning Systems: Experiences from Nepal and Peru, Rugby, UK: Practical Action

<sup>2</sup> Brown et al., (2019) Gender Transformative Early Warning Systems: Experiences from Nepal and Peru, Rugby, UK: Practical Action



For example, sensitisation of children and teens on the topic of safe spaces during disasters through access to technology in a cultural and age sensitive manner is a potential youth friendly method of outreach and risk reduction. Digital technology has also been instrumental in raising awareness and building women's knowledge to disaster risk reduction. Further, it helps build inclusive systems providing access to those who cannot be directly engaged due to natural and other obstacles, such as patriarchal restrictions not permitting women to access public services, lack of other in-person engagement mechanisms, etc. Access to digital technology and the efficient use of it has proven very successful and useful in times of disasters and emergencies, especially with the impacts of technology during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has provided safety and coping mechanisms especially for women, young women and girls especially against gender-based violence during disasters.

The [Women's Resilience to Disasters \(WRD\) programme](#) aims to render the lives and livelihoods of women and girls resilient to disasters and threats, contributing to sustainable, secure, and thriving communities. One of its main objectives is to support countries in adopting gender-responsive decision-making and governance systems, and enabling targeted action to build the resilience of women and girls. The UN Women's Global Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Team and [The Youth Leaders and Young Professionals \(YLYP\) Network](#) is delighted to jointly organize this event and hopes to invite a variety of youth leaders, young professionals, civil society networks, students and activists to support them in leveraging their voices and experiences with digital technology, disasters and resilience.

**This event shall focus on engaging young people in a discussion on the role of digital technology access in building women's resilience to disasters.** The event shall be held online through Zoom platform at 15 February 2023, 10.00-11.00 AM EST/ 4.00-5.00 PM CET. Registration may be done on this [link](#).

This event forms part of the YLYP event series leading up to the NGO CSW Forum which aims to prepare the youth to have a meaningful and effective experience at the [67<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women \(CSW67\)](#) which has the theme: *"Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls"*.

#### **Objectives of the Discussion:**

1. Showcase the use of Information and Communication Technologies to enhance the access and use of risk information for young women and girls;
2. Raise awareness and address the challenges faced by women, young women and girls using ICT for disaster risk reduction;
3. Network with young people and introduce them to WRD and the Knowledge hub, inviting them to participate and become active members;
4. Promote and propagate the knowledge of WRD mechanisms and the work of UN Women for it;
5. Engage in a discussion on maximizing joint advocacy and participation of youth online using technology for women's and girls' resilience to disasters.

## “The Role of Access to Digital Technology in Building Women’s, Young Women’s and Girls’ Resilience to Disasters” Programme

Time	Topic	Facilitator/Speaker
10.00-10.03 AM EST 4.00-4.03 PM CET	<b>Introductions</b>   3 mins	Srruthi Lekha Raaja Elango Member, Youth Leaders and Young Professionals Network Women’s Resilience to Disasters (WRD) Team UN Women
10.03-10.10 AM EST 4.03-4.10 PM CET	<b>Keynote Address</b>   7 mins	Jeyran Jafarova Secretary, Non-Alignment Movement (NAM)
10.10-10.15 AM EST 4.10-4.15 PM CET	<b>The role of youth leadership and network's participation in DRR through the use of technology</b>   5 mins	Devan Zingler Co-Chair, NGO CSW/NY Youth Leaders & Young Professionals (YLYP)
10.15-10.22 AM EST 4.15-4.22 PM CET	<b>The role of data collection through the use of technology and protection of digital rights for women for DRR</b>   7 mins	Luísa Franco Machado Data Economist, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
10.22-10.29 AM EST 4.22-4.29 PM CET	<b>The WRD Knowledge Hub and its potential in supporting women and girls to access information and technology on gender-responsive DRR</b>   5 mins	Maria Campuzano Perez Women’s Resilience to Disasters (WRD) Intern UN Women
10.29-10.34 AM EST 4.29-4.34 PM CET	<b>Padlet Activity: Youth Leadership and Mobilisation for Women's Resilience to Disasters using technology</b>   7 Minutes	Srruthi Lekha Raaja Elango
10.34-10.54 AM EST 4.34-4.54 PM CET	<b>Open Forum/Discussion</b>   20 mins	Srruthi Lekha Raaja Elango
10.54-10.57 AM EST 4.54-4.57 PM CET	<b>Closing Remarks</b>   3 mins	Camille Alison Adle Disaster Risk Reduction and Women’s Resilience to Disasters Programme Analyst UN Women
10.57-11.00 AM EST 4.57-5.00 PM CET	<b>Photo Opportunity</b>	Srruthi Lekha Raaja Elango