

GENDER AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION TOOL FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS

Photo: UN Women

Gender and DRR tool for Parliamentarians¹

Why should parliament and parliamentarians be gender responsive for DRR?

Parliament and parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to formulate, oversee, and monitor gender-responsive disaster risk reduction laws and policies and their impact at local levels. The CEDAW Recommendation 37 explicitly calls for parliamentarians to; develop new or amend existing disaster risk reduction-related legislation with a gender equality and social inclusion lens; prepare gender-responsive DRR budget allocations; and hold governments accountable for the protection of women and girls. Parliamentarians can play an instrumental role in fulfilling these legal commitments and develop gender-responsive policies, strategies, plans, budgets and set up institutional arrangements.

What must be done?

There are five key priorities:

1. **Mainstream disaster risk reduction into women-focused development work:** Women's development initiatives and policies or legislation should include

disaster risk reduction and resilience, especially when dealing with water management, livelihoods, agriculture, food security, natural resource management, urban resilience, climate change, poverty reduction, social protection, education, and leadership.

2. **Integrate women's needs and concerns into a broad-based community development agenda in disaster-prone areas:** Governments should promote women's participation and leadership in disaster risk reduction and resilience, and include the perspectives, priorities, and knowledge of women and girls in disaster risk assessment, disaster risk reduction planning, and preparedness.
3. **Make existing disaster risk reduction/resilience policies and programmes gender responsive and mainstream DRR into gender polices and plans:** Strengthen the disaster resilience of women - in all their diversity - living in high-risk areas, harness women's capabilities, and encourage women's participation in the policy and decision-making process in building national resilience to disasters and climate change.
4. **Ensure disaster-vulnerable families can afford to educate their daughters:** Poor rural communities are vulnerable to hazards such as drought and the effects of climate change. The focus should be on such measures as income diversification, building drought resistance, micro-farming, and micro-insurance, so that poor men and women can continue to prioritise their daughters' education.

¹ Adapted from *Advocacy toolkit for Parliamentarians, Disaster Risk Reduction: An Instrument for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*, Published by IPU with UNISDR, Geneva, Switzerland, September 2010. <https://www.undrr.org/publication/advocacy-kit-parliamentarians-disaster-risk-reduction-instrument-achieving-millennium>

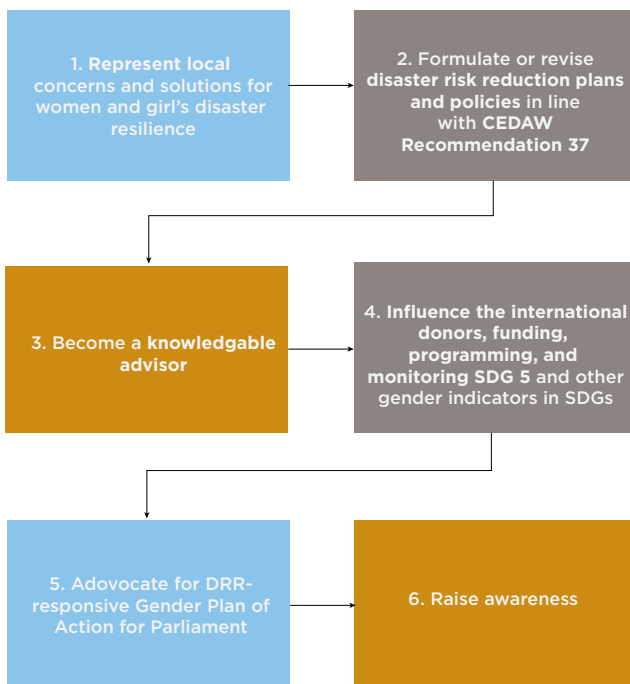
- Promote women and girls' participation and leadership in disaster risk education through school-based community learning and development projects. This should be part of a national curriculum and should include the sharing of good practices in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation for gender equality. It should promote women's leadership and decision-making roles at local to national level in disaster risk management/development committees and teams.

BOX 1

“Women in West Africa play an important role in food security for their families. Disasters increase their stress and workload, depriving women of the time to address the needs of their families and leading girls to drop out of school to help at home.”

Source: [Parliamentarians' plan of action for making Millennium Development Goal programmes disaster resilient, June 2010](#)

How can parliamentarians make change happen?



Six ways to make change happen

- Represent local concerns**
Learn from the experience of local women. This includes a better understanding of their vulnerabilities, strengths, knowledge, and insights through discussion and the collection of good practices in cooperation with community-based organisations for disaster risk reduction and resilience alongside women's representative organisations. Official efforts should be made to assess women's contributions to building disaster and climate resilience and promoting their implementation.
- Influence national spending, laws, and policy**
Legislate to integrate gender into disaster risk reduction and risk-informed development spending and existing work. National policy and legislation should aim to empower women's leadership in disaster risk reduction and community development, and girls' participation on disaster risk reduction. This requires the active support of parliamentary committees for the development sectors, with ministries responsible for gender and disaster risk reduction issues, in line with international agreements including [CEDAW Recommendation 37](#) on disaster risk reduction, the [Beijing Declaration](#), and national human rights law and local policy. One of the critical challenges that parliamentarians encounter is allocation of funds for DRR, while ensuring that these measures are gender responsive. The Ministry of Finance will therefore play a pivotal role. The funding for gender responsive DRR can come from various line ministries who have dedicated budgets for gender and social inclusion especially the Ministry of climate change/environment, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Social Welfare. However, other government entities such as national disaster management agencies and other sector agencies should also secure allocations for gender responsive DRR/risk informed development/resilience interventions.
- Become a knowledgeable monitor and advisor**
Join networks of national, regional, and global experts (e.g. the [Women's Resilience to Disasters Community of Practice](#) and the [Women in DRR network](#)) and share experiences, gain knowledge, and partner with them to conduct capacity-building workshops for government workers and parliamentarians.
- Influence international donors**
Press for funding, programming, and monitoring of SDG 5 to be linked to indicators for gender-disaggregated disaster impact as well as gender and DRR related

targets in other SDGs. Parliamentarians should ensure gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and resilience cuts across all relevant SDGs including SDG 5 (gender equality), food security (SDG 2), good health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), urban resilience (SDG 11), and climate change (SDG 13) in negotiations over international development assistance funding.

5. [Advocate for a DRR-responsive Gender Plan of Action](#)

The Ministry of Women with technical assistance from UN Women and UNDRR should support the International Parliament Union and the national parliaments to develop a DRR-responsive Gender Plan of Action for gender-sensitive parliaments. This would include revision or enacting new gender-responsive DRR legislations, gender budgeting and setting up allocation of funds for gender-responsive DRR and climate change. It would also be supported by a robust coordination mechanism and partnership between the line ministries for gender and DRR, and the enactment of gender-responsive laws and policies for example mandating 50-50 membership of women and men in disaster management committees and teams at all levels and supporting women's leadership including in the senior level decision making roles.

6. [Raise awareness](#)

Publicise local women's roles, responsibilities, and potential for disaster risk reduction and disaster resilient community development, and campaign through the local, national and international media against gender-based injustice, poverty and the lack of gender concerns in disaster risk reduction. Partnerships with organisations focused on gender, disasters and development will be effective. Whenever possible, bring disaster risk reduction issues into established high-profile national and global forums already addressing gender inequality in development, such as UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the [UN Commission on the Status of Women](#).

Resources

[Advocacy toolkit for Parliamentarians, Disaster Risk Reduction: An Instrument for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals](#): assists members of parliament in their oversight of national progress and investments made towards achieving the MDGs from the perspective of disaster risk reduction, a crucial component of development policies. Goal by goal, the publication outlines priorities, steps and interventions required to reduce or eliminate disaster risks. The kit provides examples of good parliamentary practices in many countries and shows why disaster risk reduction is indispensable for ensuring steady progress towards the achievement of the MDGs.

[Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments: A self-assessment toolkit](#) helps parliaments evaluate how gender sensitive they are, assess their current practices and policies, identify possible areas for reform, plan for change, and establish mechanisms to monitor progress.



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