

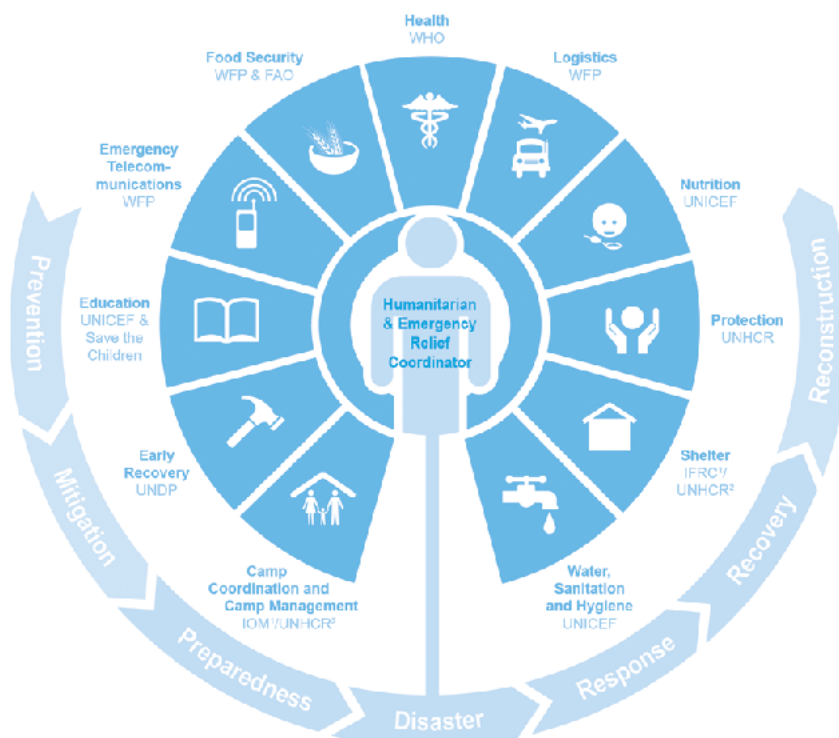
# GENDER-RESPONSIVE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Photo: UN Women

## Who leads disaster preparedness and response in a country?

**Coordination for disaster preparedness and response in a country is led by the National Disaster Management Office and involves relevant line ministries.** The key coordination structures within the UN are the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the inter-cluster coordination forum (see *Figure 1*). UN Women should actively participate and should strengthen coordination by advocating and mobilising their inclusion across all preparedness elements.

**FIGURE 1**  
Key UN Coordination structures



Source: [UN OCHA](#)

## Elements of disaster preparedness

- **Coordination:** Cross-sectoral coordination between various stakeholders especially the line ministries is key for preparedness activities. Gender equality and social inclusion issues must be adequately addressed across all sectors/clusters.
- **Gender Analysis** to inform preparedness: Conduct gender analysis before, during, and after disasters in collaboration with field teams of implementing partners using relevant tools and approaches. Use this gender analysis to inform preparedness and contingency planning.
- **Vulnerability Assessment:** Vulnerability assessment is essential to identify
  - i. the most high risk communities and people;
  - ii. identify why they are most vulnerable;
  - iii. highlight which capacities need to be developed/strengthened; and
  - iv. confirm what relief and services are specifically needed. It is important to provide technical support to ensure gender-differentiated insight into both the capabilities and vulnerabilities of all disaster-affected groups.
- **Information gathering and management:** Allocate enough time to collect essential gender and protection information while ensuring the gender balance of the assessment team. Ideally, same-sex discussions should be conducted to identify the needs, coping abilities, and best solutions for all in the affected populations. Tools such as needs, sectoral, and rapid assessment formats should be structured to capture in-depth analysis based on relevant data disaggregated by sex, age, disability, and context-relevant vulnerability.
- **Capacity building:** Engaging communities in preparing better for disasters is key to reducing risk. The objective is to enhance and build onto the existing knowledge of all genders. Active and equal engagement of women and men in this process enhances the community's coping strategies to address hazard risks and reduces vulnerability. For this reason, many governments are actively supporting communities forming disaster/climate/resilient management committees. International or local NGOs often partner with the government as implementers to facilitate community committees creating and implementing disaster risk management plans. It is critical these committees are gender responsive.
- **Disaster simulations:** Disaster simulation exercises are used to test contingency plans. It helps responders experience the real-time pressure of disaster response, identify gaps in their preparedness, and mobilise resources to ensure effective preparedness. Simulation exercises can only be effective if context-specific gender and protection issues are woven into the disaster scenario.
- **Resource mobilisation:** The government should ensure sufficient resource allocation and funding for the development of a preparedness plan and implementation, including stockpiling specific items required by marginalised people (such as women, pregnant and lactating mothers, elderly, persons with disabilities, infants, and children), identifying physical locations for setting up women and child-friendly spaces, and capacity building of all stakeholders on gender equality and social inclusion ahead of a disaster.

## Resources:

The [\*Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action \(2018\)\*](#): The IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action provides practical guidance for humanitarian and DRR practitioners to mainstream gender equality into the humanitarian programme cycle, including preparedness across sectors.

[\*UN Women \(2020\) Checklist for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Disaster/Emergency Preparedness in the COVID-19 Context\*](#)

[\*OCHA Gender Toolkit\*](#) Pages 9 -11 for detailed guidance on the above steps for gender-responsive preparedness

[\*Handbook: Women Leadership in Disaster Management\*](#)

For more information, please visit the “[\*Early Warning, preparedness, and risk communication systems\*](#)” page on the Women’s Resilience to Disasters Knowledge Hub a one-stop-shop for all gender and disaster knowledge: [wrd.unwomen.org](http://wrd.unwomen.org)



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East and Southern Africa Regional Office  
UN Gigiri Complex, UN Avenue;  
Block M, Ground Floor  
P.O. Box 30218- 00100 Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: +254 20 762 4778

[africa.unwomen.org](http://africa.unwomen.org)

Email: [esaro.publications@unwomen.org](mailto:esaro.publications@unwomen.org)

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