



## TECHNICAL SUPPORT PAPER



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



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

## Why this paper?

This technical support paper prepared by UN Women suggests **commitments to close the gender gaps in disaster risk reduction and climate resilience in preparation for key regional and global events.**

## Why close the gender gaps?

**Disasters are not experienced uniformly by everyone in society. With more than 90-95% of disasters being climate-induced, this disparity is even more pressing.** 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.
7. Support the **implementation of the Gender Action Plan for the Sendai framework (Sendai GAP)** and related climate agreements, in coordination with local, national, regional and global stakeholders.



## Key messages

### 1. PROMOTE WOMEN'S TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

- **Women and women's organizations are critical agents of change** in disaster and climate risk reduction, yet their voice, agency, and capacities remain unleveraged.
- **Women remain underrepresented at global decision-making bodies** for advancing disaster risk reduction and climate resilience. Women made up **only 34% of delegates to COP28**, a 1% decrease from COP27, and **only 19% of heads of delegations** were women.
- Women's leadership at all levels has been associated with **better resilience outcomes for communities and marginal groups**. A [2021 study](#) in Vanuatu showed that building women's leadership in disaster preparedness and response, increased the resilience of at-risk communities and schools during and after tropical cyclone Pam.
- 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.*
- *Support and develop networks, platforms and coalitions where women leaders and women-led organizations can share knowledge, collaborate, advocate, and engage with other stakeholders for stronger gender-responsive actions in disaster and climate resilience.*

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

- **Disaggregated data must be systematically collected and reported at all levels** to support gender-responsive pre-disaster risk assessment, decision-making, action, monitoring and evaluation. Data disaggregated by sex, age, and disability (SADDD) help unpack **gendered risks** and **differentiated impacts** of disasters and interventions.
- Although the Sendai Framework acknowledges the importance of disaggregated data, it is optional across all indicators. Because it is still not reported in many countries, there are **huge gaps at a global level**, with a near total absence in disaster impact databases, and in global analyses of differential impact. As of 2023, **69 countries** were reporting some form of disaster data disaggregated by sex, age, and disability, an increase from previous years.
- 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:*
  - *Build intersectional understanding of the root causes of vulnerability;*
  - *Inform risk and needs assessments, policy and programme development; and*
  - *Monitor progress towards addressing the gender inequalities of disaster and climate risk.*

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

- Progress has been made, but there is **limited gender-responsiveness** in DRR laws, policies, strategies and plans. [UN Women's WRD Policy Tracker](#) shows **37 countries** have risk reduction/risk management frameworks inclusive of all Sendai Framework high-risk groups; **71 countries** include gender commitments in their policies, laws, and plans; and only **15 countries** highlight that women and/or women's organizations have meaningfully participated in framework development.
- UN Women analysis further shows that of inclusive frameworks identified, almost half are plans rather than laws or policies, signaling a **gap in establishing robust legal foundations for gender inclusion**.
- **No single law or policy has been identified** that fulfils all of the following: i) meaningfully engages women and women's organizations 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.*
- *Implement mechanisms for the consistent monitoring, evaluation, and accountability of gender-responsive disaster and climate policies, ensuring progress is tracked against gender equality targets and indicators.*

### 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 of national disaster risk management agencies, for example, to integrate gender equality and social inclusion meaningfully and systematically.
- **Resources need to be secured for gender-responsive budgeting** and for mainstreaming 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 funding**. Only an estimated 1.2% of worldwide funding addresses both women and the environment. To empower those left behind, climate financing and funding must be accessible to, and support women's grassroots organizations to build resilience to climate and disaster risk. The central role of women's organizations in building resilience is **threatened by a lack of funding and sources**.

#### ACTION

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

## 5. FOSTER GENDER-RESPONSIVE COORDINATION MECHANISMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- **Collaboration and cooperation between all actors** involved in resilience building is critical 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, resulting 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 organizations and organizations 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.
- **Indigenous women** also play a crucial role in disaster risk reduction and in enhancing community resilience in disasters by **developing, implementing, communicating and preserving traditional knowledge**.

### ACTION

- *Institutionalize multi stakeholder cooperation at all levels, increase resources for the participation of women's organizations and other non-traditional DRR actors in coordination mechanisms, and broker partnerships 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, women are less likely to have landownership rights than men, with less than 20 percent of landholders worldwide being women.
- The **gender digital divide** can further significantly increase disaster vulnerability alongside **unequal care burdens** (globally women provide 76 percent of all **unpaid care work** and spend 2.8 more hours than men on unpaid care work). When extreme weather events occur, women take on additional work burdens compared to men but also lose more income opportunities.
- 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.

### ACTION

- *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 for inclusive risk reduction and for evaluating progress.*

## 7. PROMOTE AND SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER ACTION PLAN UNDER THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK

- The **Gender Action Plan to support implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2023 (Sendai GAP)** was officially launched at CSW68 in March 2024 by UN Women, UNDRR, and UNFPA. The Sendai GAP was developed by Member States and other actors with support from UN Women, UNDRR and UNFPA through advocacy and technical support. It aims to guide the **integration of gender and social inclusion in national and local strategies for DRR planning and budgeting**.
- The Sendai GAP is aligned with recommendations from CSW66, the GP and the APMCDRR in 2022, as a **technical document with a high level of country and stakeholder engagement**. Furthermore, it is aligned with the existing goal, outcome, targets and priorities of the Sendai Framework, adding little burden to reporting.
- It is a **non-binding agreement that sets out priority actions that close gender gaps** in disaster risk reduction and disaster impacts, covering the seven targets of the Sendai Framework. These also include non-governmental stakeholders for an “all-of-society approach”.
- The establishment of the GAP is a **powerful step to ensure integrated and complementary approaches with the global gender action plans agreed upon for the biodiversity and climate change conventions** and will 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.



Photos: UN Women/Rahel Steinbach; UN Women/Fahad Kaizer; UN Women/Ryan Brown; UN Women/Lydia Hollister-Jones

### ACTION

- Promote and support the implementation of the Gender Action Plan to support implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2023, in coordination with local, national, regional and global stakeholders.*