



REGIONAL ASIA-PACIFIC CONFERENCE ON
GENDER AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

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HA NOI RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION ON GENDER AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



INTRODUCTION

In March 2015, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) which provides global guidance on disaster risk reduction (DRR) was adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan. One of the guiding principles for the implementation of the Sendai Framework states that *'a gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices'* and that *'women and their participation are critical to effectively managing disaster risk and designing, resourcing and implementing gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes and adequate capacity building measures need to be taken to empower women for preparedness as well as build their capacity for alternate livelihood means in post-disaster situations'*. Under Sendai Framework Priority 4, it goes on to state that *'empowering women and persons with disabilities to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches is key'* for disaster preparedness for effective response.

In the Asia-Pacific region women are significant contributors to disaster preparedness, prevention, and overall risk reduction. Women play a greater role in risk management and resilience building than often acknowledged. On the other hand, women and girls are particularly vulnerable to disasters due to structural barriers and socio-economic discrimination based on their gender. They often lack access to resources, skills and information necessary for disaster preparedness and for securing livelihoods that will enhance their resilience. For example, 77% of the dead from the 2004 Tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia, were women and girls and 55% of the dead from the 2015 Nepal earthquake were women and girls. Women are among those that make up more than 80% of those living below \$2 per day in Asia, which means they have limited access to savings to cope with disasters. Furthermore, women in Asia and the Pacific have the lowest decision making and political power in the world, thereby limiting their say and influence in DRR decision making processes.

In response to these concerns, the Regional Asia-Pacific Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction was held between 16 and 18 May 2016, organized by UN Women and the Government of Viet Nam, in collaboration with UNISDR, UNDP, and other partners, with support from the Government of Japan. The conference brought together over 300 participants from Viet Nam and twenty-two countries across the Asia-Pacific region to identify actions to ensure implementation of the Sendai Framework in the region will be gender responsive and inclusive. The participants agreed on the following set of recommendations for action, and agree to work towards incorporating these into regional and national DRR decision making processes, including the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of Sendai Framework that is expected to be adopted at the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in November 2016, and the Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific, which is expected to be endorsed by the Pacific Islands Development Forum leaders in 2016.

The drafting of the recommendations took into account the complexities that the region is facing in addressing disaster risks including the impacts of climate change, increasing inequalities between regions and between population groups - disability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, among others. The participants also considered the opportunities provided by the new context to address gender responsive DRR with new normative provisions. Gender equality is recognized in all post-2015 frameworks: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement. For the first time, these global frameworks speak to each other, with resilience being central to all. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is also developing a General Recommendation on DRR and Climate Change that will elaborate the state obligations to promote and protect the rights of women and girls in the context of disasters and climate change.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

The Conference concluded with the following recommendations for actions which are aligned with the Sendai Framework's four Priorities for Action. Each recommendation articulates how the actions will be operationalised. Furthermore, throughout the implementation of all of these processes there is need to consider horizontal and vertical accountability, monitoring and adequate allocation of resources. There is also need to ensure recognition is also made of diversity within women and girls (age, disability, ethnicity, migrant status, socio-economic status, sexual orientation and gender identity).

Priority 1: Understanding disaster risk

Policies and practices for disaster risk management should be based on an understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity, exposure of persons and assets, hazard characteristics and the environment. It is important to ensure that such knowledge is gender-responsive and can be leveraged for the purpose of pre-disaster risk assessment, for prevention and mitigation and for the development and implementation of appropriate preparedness and effective response to disasters.

Recommendation 1: Establish and update regularly national and local sex, age and disability disaggregated data (SADDD) and socio-economic baseline to inform gender responsive DRR and monitor the progress in building resilience of women, men, girls and boys to disasters.

- a) Review existing national and local sectoral databases to determine data gaps from a gender perspective.
- b) Develop coherent templates (with manageable number of questions) and guidance on collecting required data including demographic data; historical loss and damage data (loss of life, assets and livelihoods, social impacts); vulnerability and capacity (socio-economic status, coping mechanisms, unpaid care work, power relations, migration patterns); data for monitoring Sendai targets.
- c) Conduct gender analysis of disaster risks and use the gender analysis to inform national and local DRR policy development
- d) Assign clear responsibilities for concerned agencies including technical support by national statistics organisations and women's machineries for the monitoring progress on resilience building.
- e) Empower, capacitate and resource the national institutions responsible for collecting, consolidating and analysing the data including coordination with other relevant sectors, such as economic planning, SDG planning and monitoring, local government, etc.

Recommendation 2: Establish composite mechanisms and build local and national capacities across sectors for collecting, analysing, managing, using, and sharing sex, age and disability disaggregated data (SADDD) and gender and diversity analysis to inform policies and programmes.

- a) Put in place policies and regulations, provide required resources with accountability mechanisms for collecting, analysing and sharing SADDD.
- b) Make mandatory regular reporting on SADDD in DRR progress monitoring.
- c) Involve women and men from local communities and community based organisations in data collection and analysis.
- d) Strengthen disaster information management infrastructures for resilience against disasters.

Recommendation 3: Set and monitor Sendai Framework targets with gender responsive indicators.

- a) Setup a technical working group for developing and updating the gender and DRR indicators.
- b) Include progress monitoring and reporting against the gender responsive indicators in the national monitoring system and align the indicators with global agreements such as SDGs and to support the resilience agenda.
- c) Engage women's organisations and organisations representing the needs of other diverse groups at all levels.

Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk

Disaster risk governance at the national, regional and global levels is of great importance for an effective and efficient management of disaster risk. Clear vision, plans, competences, guidance and coordination within and across sectors, as well as participation of relevant stakeholders, are needed. Implementation of strong laws and legislation that defines women's roles and responsibilities are necessary for providing a solid foundation and mandate for women's participation and leadership in decision making and for creating accountability.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen legal and institutional frameworks for DRR so that:

- *They are gender responsive and inclusive;*
- *They mandate roles and responsibilities of women;*
- *They ensure the safety and protection of women and girls, in all their diversity, including against gender-based violence;*
- *They establish formal implementation and accountability mechanisms;*
- *The formulation processes are participatory, incorporating an all of society approach starting from community level consultation with gender and diversity balanced groups, singly and together.*

- a) Map and strengthen existing regional, national and local frameworks, tools and guidance for gender mainstreaming in legal/institutional frameworks for DRR, especially guidance and monitoring indicators for the Sendai Framework, so that they meet regional, national and local commitments for gender responsiveness and inclusivity.
- b) Translate and contextualize and implement international and regional gender equality (e.g. CEDAW) and DRR commitments to the national and local level in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.
- c) Consolidate regional gender and DRR standards and guidance into a simplified tool for national and local application.
- d) Develop incentives and rewards (e.g. awards and recognition) for how well gender responsive DRR is integrated (e.g. in school curricula).

Recommendation 2: Invest in developing women's and girls' leadership capacity and create an enabling environment to strengthen their active and substantive role in DRR at all levels and across all relevant sectors.

- a) Review the representation of women, especially in leadership positions at the regional, national and the local level.

- b) Harness the leadership capacity of women and girls that already exists at the local level and empower them to use it effectively.
- c) Further build and develop capacity and knowledge of women at the local level to take up leadership roles.
- d) Enable the voices and concerns of communities and local level actors in national review and law making processes through bottom up processes.
- e) Facilitate and enable technical assistance by regional and international organisations (INGOs, etc.).
- f) Inculcate political will amongst the policy makers across the region; devise advocacy mechanisms and programmes towards that end.
- g) Ensure Environmental Impact Assessments and other processes incorporate a specific analysis of gender issues and are fully participatory and go beyond simple desk reviews that do not allow the inclusion of local voices and interests.
- h) Disseminate and make information about roles, rights and responsibilities as outlined in national legal and policy frameworks accessible to all people and authorities at the local level and encourage a 'know your rights and responsibilities' approach to DRR.

Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience

Public and private investment in disaster risk prevention and reduction through structural and non-structural measures are essential to enhance the economic, social, health and cultural resilience of persons, communities, countries and their assets, as well as the environment. Such investment if not responsive to women and girls' priorities can increase vulnerabilities and risks. Participation of women and girls will be critical for the investment to drive innovation, growth and job creation while saving lives, preventing and reducing losses and ensuring effective recovery and rehabilitation. In order to build women's resilience against disasters and climate change, resilience must culminate into empowerment and equality while reducing the burden of unpaid work of women and girls.

Recommendation 1: Invest in women's resilience through identifying and supporting livelihoods that are sustainable and empowering, and gender-responsive services that enable diverse groups of women to access and benefit from these livelihoods.

- a) Train agricultural extension workers to provide gender responsive information and training on climate resilient livelihoods to women.
- b) Facilitate sharing of knowledge and practices of women and men, particularly at-risk groups from local, national and regional level that facilitates adaption to climate change and effective response to disasters.
- c) Develop women's leadership in areas of planning, decision making and monitoring capacity to develop resilient livelihoods.
- d) Identify sustainable alternative livelihoods that are empowering for women; and provide opportunities to develop necessary knowledge and skills, and access to, and control of required resources, such as access to land, vocational training and credit.
- e) Measure women's unpaid productive and care work to design policies and programmes to reduce and redistribute the burden (e.g. awareness raising programs on equal sharing of domestic work and unpaid care work, introduction of time saving measures, and inclusion of appropriate technologies and infrastructure).

Recommendation 2: Invest in social protection and social services that reduce gender inequality and other inequalities and enable at risk groups of women and men to mitigate disaster risks and adapt to climate change.

- a) Facilitate access to loans and other means of finance for women; especially assisting them in documentation and access to relevant authorities.
- b) Review existing social protection policies and programs, including budget and human resource allocations, to ensure that they provide adequate support to at risk women and men in disaster prone areas; and wherever it is missing or inadequate; design and revise the relevant policies; create awareness on social protection entitlements; and establish community monitoring and feedback mechanisms.

Recommendation 3: Invest in public and private infrastructure that meets the priorities of diverse groups of women, does not expose them to further risk, meets universal design standards, and is resilient to potential hazards.

- a) Enforce affirmative action to promote the participation and representation of women and diverse groups in forums that decide on infrastructure developments and monitoring effective implementation to ensure that infrastructural investments do not exacerbate risks and inequality.
- b) The design, enforcement, and maintenance of national building codes must incorporate universal design standards that address resilience to all forms of disasters and meet the needs of women, girls, and diverse groups.

Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction

The steady growth of disaster risk, including the increase of people and assets exposure, combined with the lessons learned from past disasters, indicates the need to further strengthen disaster preparedness for response, take action in anticipation of events, integrate DRR in response preparedness and ensure that capacities are in place for effective response and recovery at all levels. Empowering women, persons living with disabilities and other diverse groups to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches is key. Disasters have demonstrated that the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, which needs to be prepared ahead of a disaster, is a critical opportunity to “Build Back Better”, including through integrating DRR into development measures, making nations and communities resilient to disasters.

Recommendation 1: Increase inclusive and accessible education and awareness raising among females and males on gender roles, rights, and capacities to contribute to the DRR cycle.

- a) Raise the awareness of communities on the relationship between gender roles, rights, disabilities, diversity, and DRR through school curriculum programmes, and community and family education.
- b) Raise the awareness of disaster managers, main stakeholders (planners, decision makers) on gender roles in DRR and support with guidance and expertise.
- c) Disseminate inclusive and accessible messaging on disaster risks through informal and formal education channels used and accessible by women and diverse groups at the community level (e.g. community radios, community based organisations).

Recommendation 2: Implement women led security and protection interventions that reduces current risks and prevent creation of new risks to gender-based discrimination and violence.

- a) Develop capacity of women and increase women members in the security and protection interventions at the national and local levels.
- b) Establish gender baseline data and engage in regular and participatory monitoring and analysis of protection standards to inform effective response and recovery interventions.
- c) Provide comprehensive and accessible service, and referral mechanisms to promote women's and girls' safety and security in disasters (e.g. help lines, links to health services).
- d) Provide accessible women's safe spaces for responding to and addressing gender-based violence, accessing to information relevant to response and recovery, for enabling collective demands for accountability, etc.
- e) Develop and incorporate accountability indicators for security and protection in the national monitor and reporting system and Sendai Framework monitoring.

Recommendation 3: Institutionalise the leadership of women and diverse groups in disaster preparedness (including inclusive and accessible early warning system) response, recovery and reconstruction at all levels.

- a) Women and diverse groups must be represented (at least 40%) in national and local mechanisms responsible for developing disaster preparedness, response and recovery decisions.
- b) Address underlying inequalities and risk factors including access to resources (land, finance, skills, etc.) necessary for building the resilience of women and diverse groups through post disaster assessments and recovery frameworks and approaches to 'building back better' societies.
- c) Allocate resources for early warning, preparedness and recovery resources, which are gender responsive, led by women, and address their specific priorities.
- d) Set minimum standards tailored to the national and local level for gender responsive recovery and build back better actions and programming.

THE WAY FORWARD

Participants of the Conference agreed to share the Ha Noi Recommendations for Action with relevant governments, organizations, communities and other stakeholders to promote the implementation of the recommended actions. The Ha Noi Recommendations for Action will also be used to contribute to the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework and the Pacific Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development, as well as national and local plans for the implementation of the Sendai Framework. Participants also recommended that the implementation of the recommended actions be deliberated at the Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Pacific Regional Meeting on Disaster Risk Management. Countries and stakeholders are encouraged to integrate the monitoring of the implementation of these recommended actions into the local, national and regional monitoring and reporting of the Sendai Framework.

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