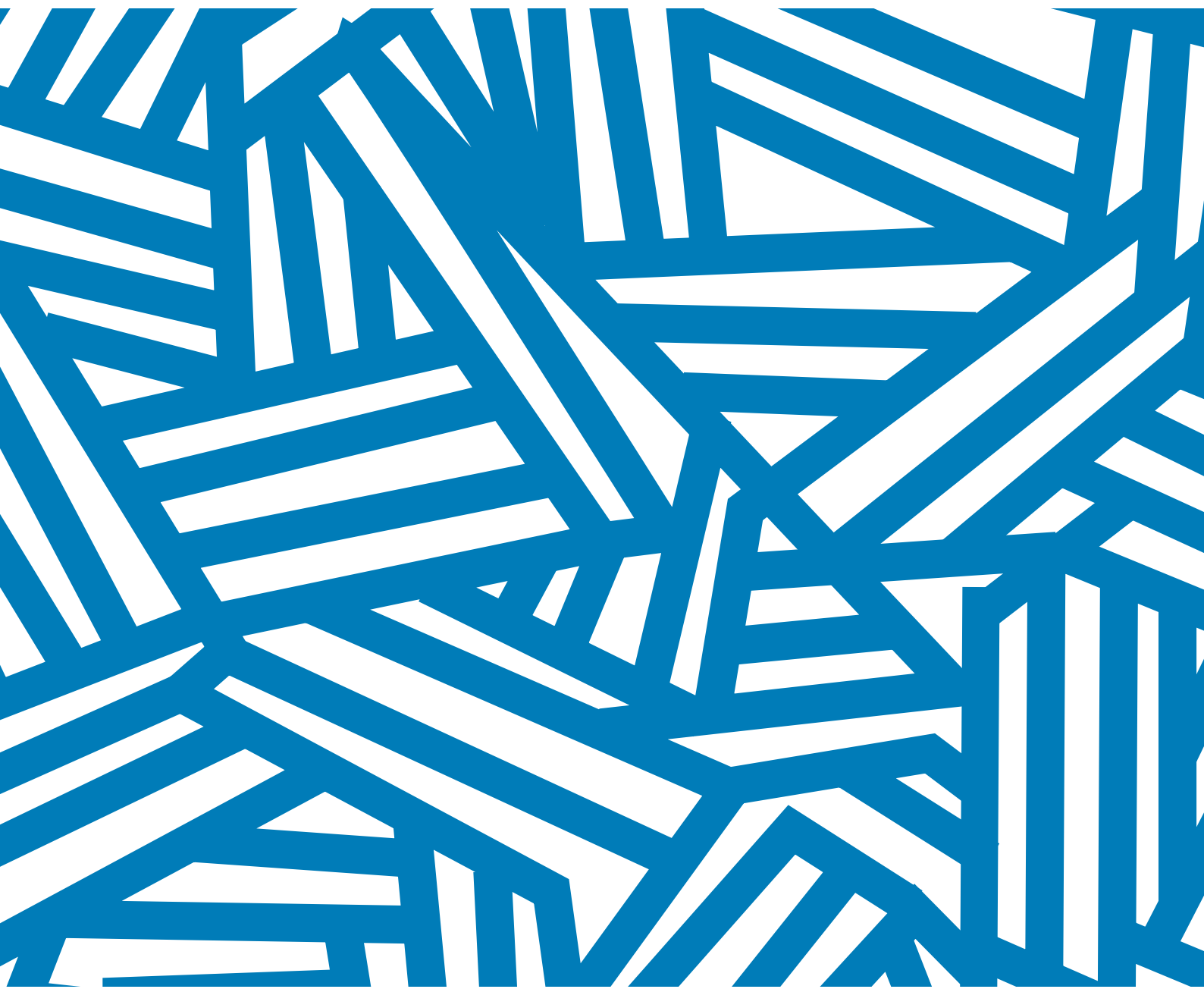


Gender Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction

A contribution by the United Nations to the consultation leading to
the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

VERSION 2



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Overview

Protecting human rights and promoting gender equality must be central to disaster risk reduction and resilience building. Disasters affect women, girls, boys and men differently. In many contexts gender inequalities constrain the influence and control of women and girls over decisions governing their lives as well as their access to resources such as finance, food, agricultural inputs, land and property, technologies, education, health, secure housing and employment. They are more likely to be disproportionately affected and exposed to risks, increased loss of livelihoods, gender-based violence, and even lives during and in the aftermath of disasters. Studies show that 'natural' disasters kill more women due to structural gender inequality¹. It is increasingly recognized and valued that women and girls – like men and boys – possess skills and capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from crisis. The capacity and knowledge of women and girls plays an important part in individual as well as community resilience. This is an important departure from traditional views of women and girls as inherently vulnerable and passive recipients of development and humanitarian assistance.

The international community has recognized the need for and has committed to a strong focus on gender equality and women's rights in disaster risk reduction. However, despite progress in the implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action, this progress has not translated into systematic action and sustainable results for women's rights and gender equality in disaster risk reduction efforts.

Disaster Impact on Gender Equality

Lack of research, sex and age disaggregated data and gender analysis regarding the impact of disaster on gender equality continues to impede proper understanding and accurate analysis of the gendered aspects of disasters and is thus rendering targeted mitigation through disaster risk reduction of the impact of disaster on women, girls, boys and men impossible.

Global reports such as the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) Global Estimates Reports, IFRC's World Disasters Reports and databases such as the Emergency Events Database do not provide sex-and age-disaggregated data on human losses or affected people because such data is not collected by organisations and countries providing information for these resources. Furthermore, little research and analysis is available on the issue of differential impact of disasters on women, girls, boys and men².

There is no systematic collection of sex and age disaggregated data on damages and losses in disasters. Damage and losses are usually recorded in terms of productive resources which tends to be owned by men. Recordings of material loss at household level, seldom even broken down to male/female headed households, hides important differences in losses between women and men. Losses in the informal sector and subsistence farming, predominated by women, are not often recorded as is the case for losses related to reproductive activities of women, all leading to a substantial undervaluation of the impact and opportunity cost for women³.

- "More than 70 per cent of the dead from the 2004 Asian tsunami were women.
- Hurricane Katrina, which struck New Orleans, USA, in 2005, predominantly affected African American women—already the region's poorest, most marginalized community.
- An estimated 87 per cent of unmarried women and 100 per cent of married women lost their main source of income when Cyclone Nargis hit the Ayeyarwaddy Delta in Myanmar in 2008."⁴
- The 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh killed 140,000 people— Within the age group 20-44, the female death rate was 71 per 1000, compared to 15 per 1000 for men.⁵
- A recent study from the Philippines shows that over the last two decades, 15 times as many infants have died in the 24 months following typhoon events as have died in the typhoons themselves. Most of them were infant girls.⁶
- men and boys may face gender based vulnerabilities. For example, more likely to be killed by natural disasters, as gender differences in certain cultural contexts can lead to differential perceptions of risk and men may be expected to take more risks or boys may take longer to recovery from trauma due to certain behavioural expectations.⁷

Status of Gender Mainstreaming in Disaster Risk Reduction

While progress has been made in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), the mid-term review of the HFA noted a lack of progress in the implementation of gender equality as a cross-cutting issue. The majority of countries did not collect gender-disaggregated vulnerability and capacity information (62 of 70 reporting countries from 2009-2011). In 2013 only 30 percent of countries reported relying on gender integration as a driver of progress⁸ and despite the increasing articulation of the importance of gender mainstreaming at policy level, it has far from become a practice in disaster risk reduction and response interventions.⁹

However, a wealth of recognised policy advice, guidelines and best practices exist on how to make disaster risk management gender sensitive. Many stakeholders, and in particular civil society and women's organizations, have provided strong evidence-based recommendations, innovations and best practices for rights-based, gender-responsive, and community-based approaches to resilience building and prevention of disasters. This implies that it is lack of political attention and priority, capacity and funding which impede significant progress towards the implementation of gender equality commitments in disaster risk management.

Promotion of gender equality has often become an "add on" to development efforts at national level despite efforts to strengthen the issue across national priorities for the last decades. Disaster risk reduction efforts face the same challenges and in both cases the work falls within specialized organisations which are largely isolated from general development efforts.

This has resulted in a disconnect between institutions promoting gender equality and national disaster risk management mechanisms, including ambiguity in terms of accountability¹⁰. At the normative level, however, member states have taken notice of the need to consider natural disasters as an important area within gender equality efforts. This has resulted in two Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) resolutions (56/2 and 58/2) on gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters.

Drivers for Integrating Gender Equality In Disaster Risk Reduction

Explicitly mentioning gender differentiation and including both women and men in all appropriate instances in disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts across sectors, e.g. addressing gender differences in access to and control over resources to ensure resilience, ensures that efforts will reduce, rather than reinforce, existing inequalities by avoiding assumptions, generalizations and stereotypes and by promoting positive change and women's rights. This will lead to more just, relevant, effective and sustainable disaster risk reduction efforts for women and men of the affected population as well as contribute to overall development and human rights objectives. Gender sensitive and participatory disaster risk reduction management can also increase and broaden ownership and sustainability of initiatives by ensuring greater relevance through equal involvement of the population as a whole.

The aftermath of a natural disaster and the recovery phase can present opportunities for new and more progressive gender roles and relationships to emerge, can provide opportunities to rebuild in a way that is inclusive of women, girls, boys and men from the affected population and influence the direction of development patterns that, prior to the disaster, may not have placed enough attention to gender equality and women's empowerment. Seizing these opportunities requires recognition that women and girls – like men and boys – have the right to and possess skills and capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. It also requires that consideration is given to the relations and power dynamics between females and males, instead of viewing them as separate groups.

Strengthening the link and accountability between the respective national institutions for gender equality issues and disaster risk management will ensure stronger cross fertilisation and clarification on recommendations for addressing gender equality in the Post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (DRR).

Recommendations for Addressing Gender Equality in

The Post-2015 Framework For Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

- The Post-2015 Framework for DRR is a key opportunity to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment becomes an integral theme for the next decade. This is the time to ensure that women's rights and the strengthened resilience of communities, and of women and girls, are at the core of disaster risk reduction efforts. Gender equality and the empowerment of women should therefore be a self-standing principle. This would reiterate that commitments and actions to gender equality are to be reflected explicitly across the Post-2015 Framework for DRR and in all policies and practices and acknowledge that women's leadership and decision-making roles are paramount for building resilience.

- The global community is committed to gender equality and the empowerment of women, including most notably in the Beijing Platform for Action. Gender mainstreaming and integration is the accepted strategy for ensuring all policies and programmes contribute to the elimination of discrimination, the promotion of gender equality and to ensure that inequality is not perpetuated. This approach is visibly reflected in the proposed SDGs which, in addition to a stand-alone goal and targets on gender equality and the empowerment of women, include gender-specific targets across the other goals.
- The paradigm shift in disaster risk reduction efforts to a focus on underlying causes of risks and vulnerabilities is an entry point for recognizing root causes and structural constraints of gender inequality and pervasive gender stereotypes and unequal power relations and for targeting those in the promotion of transformative and sustainable change. Addressing unequal power relations between women and men will contribute to enhancing women's rights, participation and leadership in prevention and reduction of disaster risk at all levels. Recognizing leadership capacity of women as active agents and contributors and further strengthening women's capacities and supporting their leadership role in disaster risk reduction is vital for community resilience as a whole.
- The Post-2015 Framework for DRR provides the opportunity to strengthen modalities of cooperation and partnerships with women's and grassroots organizations, and with gender equality champions in the development, management, implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. It also provides the opportunity for improved accountability through gender responsive monitoring, reporting and review systems to keep implementation on track. To ensure proper understanding of and accountability to gender-responsive disaster risk reduction existing gaps in data must be addressed.
- Systematic collection and use of sex and age disaggregated data and gender analysis must become a collective priority so that the differential impact of disasters on females and males can be made visible, disaster risk reduction efforts improved and the disproportionate impact of disasters on women and girls brought to an end. This requires that the Post-2015 Framework on DRR explicitly promote gender responsive and harmonized information management, statistical methodologies and processes as well as using existing data to its full potential in research informing disaster risk reduction to close existing knowledge gaps. Without data, problem identification and accountability is superficial and perpetuate responses that are insensitive to gender differentials.
- Efforts to strengthen mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction across sectors, through priority actions to be set out in the Post-2015 Framework for DRR, should include systematic and visible integration of commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment, building on the existing body of knowledge concerning recommendations, guidelines and best practices for sector specific gender mainstreaming.

International Commitments on Gender Equality

Commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment and rights in relation to "natural" disasters request that a gender perspective be integrated into related policy making, assessments, monitoring and evaluation. As a minimum, women's participation and leadership in disaster management should be guaranteed, while the collection and utilization of sex- and age-disaggregated data should be made a routine. These commitments are set out, amongst others, in the following agreements and declarations, and should be reflected in the Post-2015 Framework for DRR:

- The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
- Outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.
- Agreed conclusions of the forty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) of 'Environmental management and the mitigation of natural disasters' of 2002.
- Commission on the Status of Women resolution 49/5 of 11 March 2005.
- The Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 -2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan from 18 to 22 January 2005.
- The Beijing Agenda for Global Action on Gender-Sensitive Disaster Risk Reduction, Beijing, China, 22 April 2009
- Commission resolution 55/1 of 4 March 2011 entitled "Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting empowerment of women in climate change policies and strategies".
- Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, entitled "The future we want".
- CSW resolution 56/2 of 9 March 2012 on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

- CSW resolution 58/2 of 18 March 2014 on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.
- Relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, including resolutions 68/102 and 68/103 of 13 December 2013 and 68/211 of 20 December 2013, and Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/6 of 17 July 2013.

Measuring Gender Equality in DRR

The set of 22 core indicators across the five HFA priorities for action does not make reference to gender equality or require information disaggregated by sex and age, contributing to the lack of attention to gender equality in implementation of the HFA¹¹.

Civil society and women's organizations have highlighted the need for stronger accountability to gender equality in the Post-2015 Framework for DRR. Many important recommendations on this issue emerged from the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May 2013 and the various regional platforms on disaster risk reduction.

Recognition of women's rights and capacities to lead and manage DRR as a stand-alone Guiding Principles is crucial. Policymakers must insure that income and time of poor women, many of whom are already organizing and taking leadership, are rewarded, not held back, in the future. Women must be positioned as more than a human and economic resource for DRR but as active stakeholders and decision makers, with rights, agency and knowledge. Through Principles, targets and indicators, the Post-2015 Framework for DRR can guide Member States toward measures to ensure women's active role is encouraged, valued and supported - so that women and girls are assuming decision making roles in their communities and households in the decade ahead.

Addressing gender equality effectively and with measurable results therefore requires dedicated targets; as well as gender mainstreaming across all other targets.

Gender Responsive Targets And Indicators for the Post-2015 Framework For DRR

Gender-specific targets and indicators are required to ensure accountability for progress in implementation of gender equality commitments. To address the full range of structural barriers to gender equality and to harness the synergies between gender equality and disaster risk reduction, it is essential to include gender equality targets. In addition, all the targets and indicators of the Post-2015 Framework for DRR should strive to include sex and age-disaggregated data. Giving explicit attention to the situation of women and men, rather than generic attention to households and affected people, surfaces important disparities as well as vulnerabilities and risk exposure of women and men of all ages, as well as of marginalized groups.

The zero draft of the Post-2015 Framework for DRR proposes 5 targets which are gender-blind. To ensure gender mainstreaming the following language addition is proposed in bold:

*"... reduce disaster mortality of **women, men and children of all ages**, by...; reduce the number of affected of **women, men and children of all ages**, by...; reduce disaster economic loss; increase the number of countries with **gender sensitive** national and local strategies by..."*

In addition a global target with dedicated focus on gender equality could be included such as:

- Increase in the proportion of women in decision making positions in disaster risk management authorities by a given % by 2025, or
- Increase in funds for disaster risk reduction efforts allocated to advancing gender equality is the principal objective by a given % by 2025

Indicators on underlying drivers of risk and resilience should make reference to the Gender Inequality Index as well as the GenderStats EDGE indicators¹² such as:

- Proportion of (adult) population who own land, by sex
- Proportion of population with access to credit by sex
- Adolescent fertility rate

For the proposed goal of the Post-2015 Framework for DRR ; *The prevention of disaster risk creation and the reduction of the existing disaster risk through economic, social, cultural and environmental measures which address exposure and vulnerability, and thus strengthen resilience*,¹³ it is recommended to include specific input indicators on gender equality capturing progress in disaster risk reduction efforts to:

- Promote the equal participation and leadership of women and men.
- Enhance women's equal access to information, including early warning, training, education and capacity building to strengthen their self-reliance and ability to claim their rights.
- Strengthen the systematic collection and use of sex and age disaggregated data, and gender analysis in vulnerability-, risk-, damage and loss assessments- and contingency planning.
- Strengthen the integration of gender equality commitments into legal frameworks, institutional commitments, organizational arrangements and capacity development, monitoring and accountability frameworks and in the overall planning cycle of disaster risk management.
- Ensure women's legal entitlements and practical access to assistance and services in relation to disaster management such as basic health services, including reproductive and sexual health services, compensations, cash transfers, insurance, social security, credit, employment.
- Minimize protection risks related to disasters and disaster risk reduction efforts in line with the do-no harm principle and commitments to prevention and response to gender-based violence.
- Enhance integration of sexual and reproductive health and rights into disaster risk reduction efforts.
- Recognize and strengthen women's organizations and networks at the national, regional and global level.
- Establish and maintain disaster risk reduction accountability, planning and monitoring mechanisms, with the involvement of grassroots women and other public and private stakeholders at the local and national level. Strengthen the integration of gender equality considerations across sectorial efforts to mainstream disaster risk reduction.

Contributing Organisations

- **UN Women:** UN Women is committed to supporting all partners in implementing their commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment in disaster risk reduction. (www.unwomen.org)
- **Gender and Disaster Network (GDN):** GDN is committed to connecting people and organizations working for gendered disaster risk reduction and to knowledge exchange to reduce gender inequality in disaster. (www.gdnonline.org)
- **Huairou Commission: Women, Homes and Community** is committed to strengthen the capacity of grassroots women's networks and organized communities to gain the support of and establish partnerships with local authorities, national governments, academics, donors to – to bring their priorities practices to the forefront of policy programming in order to ensure women's empowerment and gender equality in disaster risk reduction. (www.huairou.org)
- **Other organizations committed to gender equality and women's empowerment in disaster risk reduction:** UNESCO, UNISDR, WFP, UNDP, WHO, UNFPA, OXFAM, WEDO

Key Documents / Source of additional informations

- Towards the Post-2105 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2), Women as a force in resilience building, gender equality in disaster risk reduction, A Background Paper on gender inclusion in HFA2¹⁴
- Policy brief: how should the new international disaster risk framework address gender equality¹⁵
- Making disaster risk reduction gender-sensitive: policy and practical guidelines¹⁶
- Gender and Disaster Network
- Leading Resilient Development: Grassroots Women's Priorities, Practices and Innovations¹⁷
- Statement and Outcomes of the International Conference on the Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services¹⁸

- ¹ See World Health Organization, "Gender, Climate Change, and Health" (Geneva, 2011); Gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2014/13).
- ² Women, girls and Disasters , A review for DFID by Sarah Badshaw and Maureen Fordham, 2013
- ³ Women, girls and Disasters , A review for DFID by Sarah Badshaw and Maureen Fordham, 2013, Angeles Arenas Ferriz (2001) The Relevance of Considering a Gender Perspective in Damage Assessment and Recovery Strategies: A Case Study in El Salvador, Central America.
- ⁴ Climate Change Connections :Women at the Forefront UNFPA, WEDO 2009, www.preventionweb.net/files/12053_climateconnections1overview1.pdf
- ⁵ Mushtaque, A., 1993, The Bangladesh Cyclone of 1991: Why So Many People Died, Disasters, Vol 17 (4)
- ⁶ J.K. Antilla-Hughes, S.M. Hsiang 2014: Destruction, Disinvestment, and Death: Economic and Human Losses Following Environmental Disaster. San Francisco, USA
- ⁷ Women, girls and Disasters , A review for DFID by Sarah Badshaw and Maureen Fordham, 2013
- ⁸ Towards the post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2): Women as a force in resilience building, gender equality in disaster risk reduction, April 2014, A background Paper on gender inclusion in HFA2
- ⁹ Women, girls and Disasters , A review for DFID by Sarah Badshaw and Maureen Fordham, 2013
- ¹⁰ Towards the post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2): Women as a force in resilience building, gender equality in disaster risk reduction, April 2014, A background Paper on gender inclusion in HFA2
- ¹¹ ibid
- ¹² <http://genderstats.org/EDGE>
- ¹³ Development of the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction -Zero draft submitted by the Co-Chairs of the Preparatory Committee (20 October 2014), <http://www.wcdrr.org/preparatory/post2015>
- ¹⁴ Towards the post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2): Women as a force in resilience building, gender equality in disaster risk reduction, April 2014, A background Paper on gender inclusion in HFA2
- ¹⁵ Policy brief: how should the new international disaster risk framework address gender equality? Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN); Overseas Development Institute (ODI) 2014
- ¹⁶ Making disaster risk reduction gender-sensitive: policy and practical guidelines, UNISDR, UNDP and IUCN, 2009
- ¹⁷ Leading Resilient Development. Grassroots Women's Priorities, Practices and Innovations, by Maureen Fordham and Suranjana Gupta, GROOTS International, UNDP (2011). <http://website.huairou.org/sites/default/files/Leading%20Resilient%20Development%20GROOTS.pdf>
- ¹⁸ This will be available after the Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services, Universal Access | Empowering Women , Geneva, 5-7 November 2014: <http://www.wmo.int/genderconference/>

About the UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience: The UN Plan of Action, endorsed by the UN Secretary-General and the Executive Heads of UN Specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes, includes a commitment for the UN system to work together to ensure disaster risk reduction is a key component of the post-2015 development agenda supported by a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA2). The UN Plan of Action improves system-wide coordinated actions and coherence, as well as increased effectiveness and collaboration in the support to Member States on disaster risk reduction.

UN High Level Programmes Committee Senior Managers Group on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience (HLCP/SMG): Members of the HLCP/SMG that oversees the implementation of the UN plan of Action are FAO, IAEA, IFAD, IFRC, ILO, IMO, IOM, ITU, UNAIDS, UNCCD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHABITAT, UNHCHR, UNICEF, UNISDR, UNOCHA, UNOPS, UNOOSA, UNWOMEN, UNWTO, UPU, WFP, WHO and the World Bank.

