



GENDER EQUALITY

UPDATE No. 11

Mainstreaming Gender in Disaster Risk Reduction



Rural women farmers engaged in irrigation activity in Sindhuli. *Photo Credit: UN Women / N. Shrestha*

Existing gender and social inequalities make women more vulnerable to disasters and climate change than their male counterparts, particularly women and minorities that are engaged in vulnerable and informal sectors. Despite the accepted fact that gender plays a large role in determining vulnerability, there is still limited understanding of the linkages between gender and climate change.¹ Furthermore, women tend to be perceived as victims of disasters and climate change and not as equal players and leaders. In Nepal, this leads to them taking on a more passive role in actions rather than ones in decision-making positions or ones in which they can meaningfully contribute. In the longer run, this makes women more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change because their needs and priorities are less likely to be considered in adaptation plans.²

The Government of Nepal has taken key strides to show its political commitment to climate change and disaster risk reduction. The Government developed its National Strategy on Disaster Risk

Management (2009) in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. The National Strategy has outlined national level priorities and strategies in the broader areas of disaster risk management with key focus on building a disaster resilient Nepal. The Government has also made considerable progress in terms of defining its Climate Change Strategy (2010), National Adaptation Programme of Action (2009) and developing its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (2016). Currently the Government is taking steps to review its progresses made and develop plans for the implementation of the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) which will fit into the next five-year National Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction. In light of the development of the National Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction in Nepal, this issue of the Gender Equality update highlights key considerations and makes recommendations for mainstreaming gender equality into the plan.

Recommendations on Mainstreaming Gender Equality into the National Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction

1. Invest in developing women's leadership capacity and create an enabling environment to strengthen their active and substantive role in disaster risk reduction, at all levels and across all relevant sectors.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Establish composite mechanisms and build local and national capacities across sectors for collecting, analysing, managing, using, and sharing SADDD and gender and diversity analysis to inform policies and programmes.
5. 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.
6. Establish the role of women's groups and machineries in the monitoring and evaluation of the National Action Plan on DRR.
7. Apply Gender Responsive Budgeting to ensure investment in gender, monitoring of actions and the increase in support specifically targeting women in DRR.

¹ Mainlay, J., & Tan, S. F. (2012, November). *Mainstreaming gender and climate change in Nepal*. IIED Climate Change Working Paper Series.

² WEDO. (2016, June 12). *Infographic: Gender and Climate Change*. Retrieved from [wedo.org: http://wedo.org/gender-climate-infographic/](http://wedo.org/gender-climate-infographic/)

Some Useful Documents

- Hanoi Recommendations for Gender in Disaster Risk Reduction
- Gender Inclusion & Women's Empowerment at the Centre of Resilience Building: Operationalizing the 'Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction'
- Making it Count - Integrating Gender into climate change and disaster risk reduction: A Practical How-to Guide
- Lobbying Document for Gender Friendly Legal Framework Relating to Disasters in Nepal prepared by the Women Friendly Disaster Management Core Group of Women's CSOs
- New Delhi declaration on disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific 2016
- Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

Highlights from Desk Review on Gender Equality, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction

UN Women recently undertook a desk review of Gender Equality and Disaster Risk Reduction. The desk review looked at twenty-six papers, research and studies on gender, climate change, disaster risk reduction and related topics conducted by research institutions, INGOs and UN agencies focusing on Nepal and the South Asia region.

Recommendations from the desk review are as follows:

1. For effective policies and plans on climate change and disaster risk management, there is a need for greater evidence and analysis to increase understanding, knowledge and awareness around gender in climate change and disasters. Despite availability of scattered studies, there needs to be a greater understanding of the relationship between gender, climate change and disasters. Analysis needs to further inform policies and plans at the national and local levels. Particularly at the local level, stronger gender analysis needs to be applied in community based climate and disaster risk assessments

which inform development of local level plans.

2. Collection, analysis and use of Sex, Age and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) is fundamental to reporting and decision-making on disaster risk management. Not only is this a concern for issues of mortality in times of disaster, however accurate information as to who is preparing for disasters, using services and safe spaces and collecting relief and support services is all required to capture a complete understanding of how disaster management is working for women and men.

3. Capacity building of national disaster management and women's machineries on gender equality in disaster risk management is needed to ensure effective implementation of policies and plans. Trainings, tools and guidelines targeting implementers of programmes will help to translate policies to benefit men, women and other vulnerable groups.

4. Women's participation in committees on disaster management at all levels is essential in ensuring women's key concerns are highlighted and considered in planning and implementation of disaster risk management. Currently, despite a requirement that committees have a thirty percent membership of women, this minimum mark is not met. Women's meaningful participation can be ensured by capacity building of women's groups on climate change and disaster risk management, including humanitarian response.

5. Investing in women's livelihoods which address the barriers they face in access to new technologies, information, skills, finances and markets is essential to building their resilience to climate change and disasters. Livelihoods of women are particularly affected in disasters, particularly due to their high engagement in the low-paying, informal labour market. With effects of climate change impacting the agricultural and natural resource sectors.

6. Strengthening early warning system to ensure actionable, timely early warning messages reach women. Although the study identified the need to further examine the early warning system to better understand how men and women were getting the early warning information, it noted that information did not reach women compared to their male counterparts. Thus, it is necessary that early warning messages are accessible to all persons in the communities, are localized, timely and is translated into different local languages.

7. Measures to mitigate the risks of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in disasters need to be put in place before disasters to ensure incidences are controlled during a disaster. There is a greater risk of SGBV in disasters which poses the greatest risk to women in accessing goods and services on disaster risk management including humanitarian support. Women's sexual and reproductive health is likely to be affected by climate change and disasters, and measures to address these concerns need to be explored.

Contact: Dorendra Niraula, Under Secretary, Government of Nepal, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MOWCSW) (doren_320@yahoo.com); Ganesh Chaulagai, GESI Technical Expert, UN Women Nepal (ganesh.chaulagai@unwomen.org)

This update was prepared based on the desk review of various available documents and inputs from the MOWCSW.