

CHAPTER 4

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT: A GENDER-SENSITIVE APPROACH IS A SMART APPROACH

“Disaster risk reduction that delivers gender equality is a cost-effective win-win option for reducing vulnerability and sustaining the livelihoods of whole communities.”²⁶⁵

—**Margareta Wahlström**, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, et al.

Women and girls, who account for over half of the 200 million people affected annually by natural disasters, are typically at greater risk from natural hazards than men – particularly in low-income countries and among the poor.²⁶⁶ Natural disasters and climate change often exacerbate existing inequalities and discrimination, including those that are gender-based, and can lead to new forms of discrimination.

The term “gender” refers to the socially-constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a society considers appropriate for a person based on his or her assigned sex at birth.²⁶⁷ Understanding the gender implications and facets of natural disasters and climate change is critical to effective disaster risk management practices that enable communities and countries to be disaster resilient.²⁶⁸ All women, men, girls and boys do not face the same needs and vulnerabilities in the face of natural disasters and climate change; there are differences within each group and between individuals regarding specific protection concerns and capacities – for example, people with mental or physical disabilities, minorities and indigenous populations, the elderly, chronically ill, unaccompanied children, child-headed household, female-headed households, widows, etc. – and over time throughout the disaster and post-disaster phases. Various factors, including social, economic, ethnic,

²⁶⁵ UNISDR, UNDP and IUCN, *Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines*, 2009, Preface, by Margareta Wahlström, Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director General, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and Jordan Ryan, UN Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator of UNDP and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/9922

²⁶⁶ More than 100 million disaster-affected persons are women and girls. See: Margareta Wahlström, “Women, Girls, and Disasters,” 10 October 2012, <http://www.unisdr.org/archive/29064>. On risk and poverty, see: Alice Fothergill, “Gender, Risk, and Disasters,” *International Journal of Emergencies and Disasters*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1996, pp. 33-56; Alice Fothergill and Lori Peek, “Poverty and disasters in the United States: A review of recent sociological findings,” *Natural Hazards*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2004, pp. 89–110; World Bank, *2003 World Development Report*; “Fighting Poverty while Supporting Recovery from Major Disasters, Synthesis Report, Learning Lessons from Recovery Efforts,” World Bank DMF and ProVention Consortium 2003, p. 1; Robin Mearns and Andrew Norton, eds., *The Social Dimensions of Climate Change: Equity and Vulnerability in a Warming World*, World Bank, 2010.

²⁶⁷ Definition adapted from World Health Organization, “Gender, women and health,” www.who.int/gender/whatisgender/en/

²⁶⁸ While the focus of this chapter is on natural disasters and disaster risk management, there are some parallels with climate risk management, and this chapter discusses some of the gendered vulnerabilities and capacities of women in the face of the expected impacts of climate change.

cultural and physiological factors, affect not only the ways that disasters impact women, men, girls and boys, but also their coping strategies and their participation in prevention, relief, recovery and reconstruction processes.

Women play significant roles in all stages of disaster and climate risk management; they are often at the frontline as responders and bring valuable resources to disaster and climate risk reduction and recovery.²⁶⁹ However, the important roles or potential roles women take on are often not recognized, and women themselves “are largely marginalized in the development of DRR policy and decision-making processes and their voices go unheard.”²⁷⁰ Yet, in most crisis situations, women and children account for the majority of those affected (e.g., more than 75 percent of those displaced by natural disasters, and typically 70 to 80 percent of those needing assistance in emergency situations).²⁷¹ Moreover, global pressures of urbanization have particular implications for men and women in both urban and rural communities. As the frequency and severity of hydro-meteorological hazards due to climate change are predicted to increase, it is important to understand the relationship between gender and disasters.²⁷²

Women serve their communities as leaders in ways that often go unrecognized by national governments and international organizations. While they may not hold positions of visible political leadership (for example, as mayors), women are key to a society’s social fabric and hence, its capacity for resilience. They shape behavior and transmit culture and knowledge through kin and social networks, which are critical to risk prevention and response efforts. They help to rebuild their communities after disasters strike. Women often serve as teachers, nurses and social workers and as such are well-placed to assess community needs and implement disaster relief and recovery programs. Women’s leadership in civil society organizations can provide the potential for their participation in more formal processes of DRR, response and recovery efforts.²⁷³

In addition, it is important to note the important economic role women play, and how disasters and climate change can impact their economic well-being and that of their

²⁶⁹ See for example: Elaine Enarsson, “Promoting Social Justice in Disaster Reconstruction: Guidelines for Gender-Sensitive and Community-Based Planning,” in K.R. Gupta, ed., *Urban Development Debates in the New Millennium* (New Delhi, India: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2005), pp. 25-33, and World Bank, *Gender and Climate Change: Three Things You Should Know*, 2011, p. 7, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1232059926563/5747581-1239131985528/5999762-1321989469080/Gender-Climate-Change.pdf>

²⁷⁰ UNISDR, UNDP and IUCN, *Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines*, 2009, p. 24.

²⁷¹ These figures reflect the typical demographic percentage of populations in developing countries. Chew and Badras, “Caught in the Storm: The Impact of Natural Disasters on Women, Global Fund for Women,” 2005, p. 4, www.globalfundforwomen.org/storage/images/stories/downloads/disaster-report.pdf. Lorena Aguilar, *Climate Change and Disaster Mitigation*, International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2004, www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/Manag/gender%20docs/DRR-Climate-Change-Gender-IUCN-2009.pdf

²⁷² See for example: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX)*, November 2011, www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_and_data_reports.shtml

²⁷³ In another context, research found that women’s groups played important roles in at least some peace processes even though women were not officially at the ‘negotiating table.’ See: Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, *Addressing Internal Displacement in Peace Processes, Peace Agreements and Peace-Building*, September 2007, www.brookings.edu/idp

families.²⁷⁴ Even though women often face inequitable access to control over resources and income generation opportunities, disaster and climate risk management must take into account the important economic contributions of women and how they are, or might be, affected by disasters. As a United Nations Environment Programme study explains:

“Women play a critical role in agricultural and pastoral livelihoods, often bearing significant responsibility for managing critical productive resources such as land, water, livestock, biodiversity, fodder, fuel, and food. They also contribute work and energy towards income generation and carry out a disproportional amount of daily labour compared to men in household and community spheres, such as cooking, cleaning, child care, care of older or sick family members, providing work for collective projects and during weddings, funerals and other cultural ceremonies.”²⁷⁵

Gender dimensions of natural disasters have gained increasing recognition at the international level since the 1990s.²⁷⁶ Initial strategies for disaster risk reduction developed for the 1990-2000 International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction failed to include specific gender components. However, much progress has since been made to mainstream gender in disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and programs, particularly since 2001, due to the engagement of UNDP, UNISDR and other UN agencies – such as UNIFEM, the UN Commission on the Status of Women – international financial organizations and regional and civil society organizations.²⁷⁷ Gender is a cross-cutting principle of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2000-2015: on Building Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster, which states that: “A gender perspective should be integrated into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision making processes, including those related to risk assessment, early warning, information management and education and training.” In addition, the Beijing Agenda for Global Action on Gender-Sensitive Disaster Risk Reduction (2009), adopted following the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century,” calls for gender-sensitive approaches to disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery strategies and natural disaster assistance.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ On climate change impacts, see further the below section: “Understanding Gender-Based Vulnerabilities.”

²⁷⁵ Christian Nellemann et al., (eds.), *Women at the Frontline of Climate Change: Gender Risks and Hopes*. A Rapid Response Assessment, United Nations Environment Programme, GRID-Arendal, 2011, p. 29, www.unep.org

²⁷⁶ See for example: the various examples from the 1990s in World Health Organization, “Gender and Health in Disasters,” 2000, www.who.int/gender/other_health/en/genderdisasters.pdf; Shrader, E. and Delaney, P., “Gender and Post-Disaster Reconstruction: The Case of Hurricane Mitch in Honduras and Nicaragua,” World Bank Draft Report (January 2000); Eric Neumayer and Thomas Plümpner, “The Gendered Nature of Natural Disasters: The Impact of Catastrophic Events on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy, 1981–2002,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 97, iss. 3, 2007, pp. 551–566; Elaine Enarson, “Surviving Domestic Violence and Disasters,” Elaine Enarson, “Gender and Natural Disasters” IPCRR Working Paper no.1., International Labour Organization (Sept 2000), www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/crisis/publ/index.htm; “The Role of Women in Disasters,” Disaster Preparedness in the Americas 34 (Apr 1998), Pan-American Health Organization, available at: www.vdl-bvd.desastres.net; Wiest, R. J. Mocellín and D. Thandiwe Motsisi, “El papel de la mujer en la etapa de reconstrucción y desarrollo” *Desastres y Sociedad* 4 (1995), <http://osso.univalle.edu.co/tmp/lared/public/revistas/r4/art4.htm>; *Inventario de desastres en Centro América – Período 1960-1999*.

²⁷⁷ For further examples and analysis, see: UNISDR, UNDP and IUCN, *Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines*, 2009, www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/9922

²⁷⁸ See the documents available at UN Women: “Beijing and its Follow up,” www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/index.html

More generally, the UN system has taken action toward achieving gender equality, such as by adopting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979 and the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, which established gender mainstreaming as a global strategy for the promotion of gender equality.²⁷⁹ It also recognized that "... many women are also particularly affected by environmental disasters, serious and infectious diseases and various forms of violence against women," and called on governments to implement various actions to guard against and address these issues.²⁸⁰ Building on the Beijing Platform for Action, in 1997, the UN system began to work towards mainstreaming gender perspectives into all of its policies and programs, at all levels, which "...has provided an enabling environment for gender mainstreaming in DRR."²⁸¹ Reflecting this push toward gender mainstreaming in disaster risk management, many UN agencies and organizations have developed guidelines and manuals for a gender-based approach to disaster management.²⁸² However, the challenges lie in translating policy into effective practice. In addition, there is still much to be done to integrate gender-sensitive approaches into national legislation and policies for disaster and climate risk management. Moreover, there is broad recognition, if not a consensus, that gains in disaster and climate risk management are predicated on effectively addressing underlying gender inequities, and that disasters can open up opportunities to improve pre-disaster gender and other inequities.²⁸³ Participation is one area in which inequities must be addressed for gains in risk reduction. As Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for Disaster Risk Reduction Margareta Wahlström remarked on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Reduction, which focused on women and girls: "Countries that do not actively promote the full participation of women in education, politics, and the workforce will struggle more than most when it comes to reducing risk and adapting to climate change."²⁸⁴

²⁷⁹ See further: UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *Gender Mainstreaming: An Overview*, 2002, www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/e65237.pdf

²⁸⁰ *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, para. 256, www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf

²⁸¹ Citation from UNISDR et al., *Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines*, 2009, p. 7.

²⁸² See for example: the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) *Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters* (2011); Sphere Minimum Standards for Disaster Response; UNISDR, UNDP and IUCN, *Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines* (2009); Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, *Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Disaster Management* (2006); International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Strategy 2020; *IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action: Women, Girls, Boys and Men - Different Needs, Equal Opportunities* (2006); *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005- 2015: Building Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* (2005); and the IASC *Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings: Focusing on Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence in Emergencies* (2005).

²⁸³ UNISDR, *The Disaster Risk Reduction Process: A Gender Perspective. A Contribution to the 2009 ISDR Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction—Inputs from the Gender and Disasters Network*, Facilitated by UNISDR, Geneva, February 2009; United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), *Handbook for Estimating the Socio-Economic and Environmental Effects of Disasters*, 2003, Vol. IV, p. 45, www.gdrc.org/uem/disasters/disenvi/VOLUME%20IV.pdf

²⁸⁴ Margareta Wahlstrom, "Women, Girls, and Disasters," The Independent/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX, 22 October 2012, www.unisdr.org/2012/iddr/docs/IDDR_Factiva_Publications.pdf

In this chapter, we examine some of the gender-related vulnerabilities and capacities in natural disasters, why it is important to adopt a gender-based strategy for planning and response, what a gender-based approach to disaster management looks like, and recommendations to relevant actors.

SECTION 1 Understanding Gender-Based Vulnerabilities

IASC Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters

Protection of Women—Cross-References to Relevant Guidelines

Guideline(s) Topic

- I.1 Non-discrimination
- I.3 Participation and consultation
- I.8 Protection activities to be prioritized on the basis of assessed needs
- A.1.1 Protection of life, physical integrity and health of persons exposed to imminent risks
- A.4.1 Special attention to protection against violence, including in camps and collective centers during and after the emergency
- A.4.2 Protection against gender-based violence
- A.4.3 Protection against trafficking, child labor, contemporary forms of slavery
- A.5.2 Security and protection in camps and collective centers
- B.1.1 – B.1.2 Access to and adequate provision of humanitarian goods and services
- B.1.4 Addressing gender-specific roles in humanitarian action
- B.2.1 Including women in planning, design and implementation of food distribution
- B.2.2 Safety in accessing sanitation facilities in camps and collective shelters
- B.2.3 Adequate shelter addressing the specific needs
- B.2.5 Special attention to health needs of women
- B.2.6 Equal access to education
- C.1.5 Assistance in (re-)claiming property and acquiring deeds in one's own name
- C.2.3 Consultation and participation in planning and implementation of shelter and housing programs
- C.3.1 – C.3.2 Access to livelihoods and skills training
- D.1.1 Equal access to documentation issued in one's own name
- D.4.1 Feedback on disaster response

Women are typically more vulnerable than men to the effects of natural disasters and climate change, not only because of biological and physiological differences, but also, notably, because of socioeconomic differences and inequitable power relations.²⁸⁵ As a result, in most cases, mortality rates in disasters are higher – sometimes much higher – for women than for men. Women seem to have higher mortality rates in countries where their enjoyment of economic and social rights is low. Overall figures for flooding indicate that four women die for every male death, but that the gender differential is much less in countries where women enjoy more rights. Some studies looking at both women and children have found that they are 14 times more likely than men to die in natural disasters.²⁸⁶

Gender inequities can be evident in a lack of, or inadequate, early warning information targeting women and evacuation procedures and arrangements. Indeed, knowledge of early warnings and the decision to evacuate may be the exclusive domain of men. In some cases, women may be ill-informed about natural hazards and not allowed to make the decision to evacuate. This was the case, for example, in Bangladesh's Cyclone Gorky in 1991 in which women accounted for 90 percent of the 140,000 fatalities.²⁸⁷ In contrast, the World Bank notes that the lack of deaths in one community affected by Hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua, La Masica, was a result of women's involvement in preparedness education and other activities, including their monitoring of the early warning system.²⁸⁸

Other differences can also put women at a greater risk of mortality. For example, some women have physiological limitations that prevent them from surviving, such as less strength or endurance compared to men.²⁸⁹ In addition, they may not, compared to men and boys, have been taught to swim, and may face difficulty in fleeing with their children or elderly relatives in tow, and when pregnant.²⁹⁰ The fact that so many more women than men perished during the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami meant that many men had to take on new

²⁸⁵ Eric Neumayer and Thomas Plümpner, "The Gendered Nature of Natural Disasters: The Impact of Catastrophic Events on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy, 1981–2002," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 97, iss. 3, 2007, pp. 551–566. Neumayer and Plümpner analyzed disasters in 141 countries and found that in countries where women and men enjoyed equal rights, mortality rates for both sexes were equal.

²⁸⁶ Ariana Araujo and Andrea Quesada-Aguilar, *Gender Equality and Adaptation*, International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2007, www.gdnonline.org/resources/IUCN_FactsheetAdaptation.pdf; UNDP, *Gender and Disasters*, October 2010, www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/disaster/7Disaster%20Risk%20Reduction%20-%20Gender.pdf. See also: Neumayer and Plumper, op. cit.; Oxfam, *The Tsunami's Impact on Women*, Briefing Note, 2005, <http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/bn050326-tsunami-women>. However, men may be more likely to engage in risky behavior, owing to prevailing social norms, which may lead to higher male mortality rates, as in was observed in reactions to Hurricane Mitch. See for example: World Bank, "Hurricane Mitch: The gender effects of coping and crises," Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Notes, August 2007, No. 57, www1.worldbank.org/prem/PREMNotes/premnote57.pdf

²⁸⁷ Female mortality rates compared to male mortality rates were most significant within the 20-49 age group: they were four to five times higher. For further analysis and a related literature review, see: Keiko Ikeda, "Gender differences in human loss and vulnerability in natural disasters: A case study from Bangladesh," *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, September 1995, vol. 2 no. 2, pp. 171-193.

²⁸⁸ World Bank, *Gender and Climate Change: Three Things You Should Know*, 2011, p. 5.

²⁸⁹ Oxfam, *The Tsunami's Impact on Women*, Briefing Note, 2005.

²⁹⁰ UNISDR, UNDP and IUCN, *Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines*, 2009, p. 38.

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roles within their families, while also trying to continue to earn a living.²⁹¹

After natural disasters strike, pre-existing vulnerabilities and patterns of discrimination are usually exacerbated and women face protection risks including unequal access to assistance, discrimination in aid provision, loss of documentation, and inequitable access to property restitution.²⁹² A lack of security in camps, impunity for perpetrators of violence and a breakdown of social structures that is often prevalent in a crisis also result in protection risks for women. Women may face heightened risk of domestic violence, and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation, including trafficking.²⁹³ For example, following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, women in IDP camps in Aceh faced an increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence, including trafficking. Poor IDP camp design, including the placement and design of latrines, increased the protection risks for women and reportedly made women feel unsafe.²⁹⁴ There were reports of traffickers coming to IDP camps promising women and girls jobs, proposing marriage, or seeking adoption, and of IDPs' involvement in trafficking in the camps, such as through the recruitment of girls.²⁹⁵ Following Tropical Storm Bopha (Pablo) in the Philippines, there were reports of the presence of "recruiters" in some affected villages promising women work as domestic help in the Middle East, and a reported rise in some instances in the number of women taking up this offer.²⁹⁶ In Haiti since the 2010 earthquake, while accurate data is difficult to obtain, women and girls have been particularly vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence in camps.²⁹⁷ A 2010 UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) assessment

²⁹¹ All India Disaster Mitigation Institute, *Tsunami, Gender and Recovery*, Special Issue for International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, October 12, 2005, iss. 6, p. 3.

²⁹² See: Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) *Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters*, Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, January 2011, (adopted by the IASC in 2010), www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2011/01/06-operational-guidelines-nd

²⁹³ Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines on gender based violence (2005) recommend that humanitarian actors assume that sexual violence is present in all displacement and emergency situations, www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Portals/1/cluster%20approach%20page/clusters%20pages/Gender/tfgender_GBVGuidelines2005.pdf. See also: David R. Hodge and Cynthia A. Lietz, "The international sexual trafficking of women and children: A review of the literature," *Affilia*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 2007, pp. 163-174; Elaine Enarson, "Battered Women in Disasters: A Case Study of Gender Vulnerability," Paper presented for ASA, San Francisco, California, August 1998; Victoria Constance, "Disaster and Domestic Violence: Evaluating an Innovative Policy Response," in *Women in Disasters: Conference Proceedings and Recommendations*, May 5-6, 1998, Vancouver, British Columbia, www.gdnonline.org/resources/proceedings-latest.rtf

²⁹⁴ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *Gender-Based Violence in Indonesia: A Case Study*, 2005, p. 12, www.unfpa.org/women/docs/gbv_indonesia.pdf

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

²⁹⁶ Meena Bhandari, "Philippine storm rains down trafficking fears," *Al Jazeera*, 8 February 2013, www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/02/20132686919750.html; Patrick Fuller, "Two months on, Typhoon Bopha's victims still homeless," CNN, 5 February 2013, www.cnn.com/2013/02/05/world/asia/philippines-typhoon-survivors

²⁹⁷ On post-earthquake sexual violence in Haiti, see for example: Republic of Haiti, Submission to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review, 12th Session of the Working Group on the UPR Human Rights Council [October 3 - 14, 2011], *Gender-Based Violence Against Haitian Women & Girls in Internal Displacement Camps*, submitted by MADRE, KOFVIV, FAVILEK et al., <http://ijdh.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/UPR-GBV-Final-4-4-2011.pdf>; Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Haiti: *Sexual violence against women, including domestic sexual violence; in particular, prevalence within and outside of camps for the internally displaced; criminal prosecutions* (2011-May 2012), 8 June 2012, HT1104085.E, www.unhcr.org/refworld/

conducted after the flooding in Pakistan found that women reported sexual harassment in IDP camps, which were characterized by cramped and unsafe conditions that did not allow them to practice *purdah*, and by a mix of tribes, families and villages.²⁹⁸ The text box below highlights the range of specific provisions on the protection of women addressed in the 2010 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters.

Climate change effects also have gendered impacts on rights and livelihoods, and can result in changes to traditional practices.²⁹⁹ For example, when rural men migrate to cities because their livelihoods are threatened by the effects of climate change, rural women left behind often face increased risks.³⁰⁰ Their domestic workload usually increases, which is also generally the case after a disaster strikes. Climate change impacts can result in water scarcity, which increases the burdens on women, who are responsible for collecting water in many parts of the world.³⁰¹ As a result of the increased workload that women bear, girls may drop out of school to help their mothers.³⁰² Marriage customs in Dumuria village in Shyamnagar, India, have changed due to the increased salinity of water. Some parents do not want their daughters marrying, as no one will be able to collect water for them,

docid/4feaceb62.html; IOM, "Addressing Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in Haiti's Displacement Camps," 17 May 2011, <http://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/addressing-sexual-violence-against-women-and-girls-haitis-displacement-camps>; MADRE, "Press Release: New Report on Sexual Violence in Haiti One Year After the Earthquake," 2011, www.commondreams.org/newswire/2011/01/10-5; Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2013: Haiti*, www.hrw.org/news/2010/12/17/sexual-violence-haiti-s-camps; Human Rights Watch, "Sexual Violence in Haiti's Camps," News, 27 December 2010, www.hrw.org/news/2010/12/17/sexual-violence-haiti-s-camps; Allie Torgan, "Seeking justice for Haiti's rape victims," CNN, 26 April 2012, www.cnn.com/2012/04/26/world/americas/cnnheroes-villard-appolon-haiti-rape. On the incidence of violence against women before the earthquake, note that according to a study conducted by the Inter-American Development Bank in Haiti in 2006, one-third of women and girls said they had suffered physical or sexual violence, and more than 50 percent of those who had experienced violence were under the age of 18; study not available online—see: PAHO, "Are Haitian Women and Children Getting Less Earthquake Aid?" Press Release, 17 November 2010, http://new.paho.org/hai/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2327&Itemid=255 and "The IDB's 'A Response to Gender Based Violence in Haiti' Project, 2005-2009 (US\$145,000)," in Elizabeth Arend, *IFIs & Gender Based Violence Case Study: Haiti*, Gender Action, March 2012, p. 3, www.genderaction.org/publications/haitigbvcs.pdf

²⁹⁸ UNIFEM, *Pakistan Floods 2010: Rapid Gender Needs Assessment of flood affected communities*, September 2010, www.unifem.org/attachments/products/PakistanFloods2010_RapidGenderNeedsAssessment_en.pdf; IDMC and NRC, "Briefing paper on flood-displaced women in Sindh Province, Pakistan," June 2011, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/briefing/pakistan>

²⁹⁹ For further analysis, see for example: Christian Nellemann et al., (eds.), *Women at the Frontline of Climate Change: Gender Risks and Hopes. A Rapid Response Assessment*, 2011.

³⁰⁰ See for example: Dorte Verner, ed., *Adaptation to a Changing Climate in the Arab Countries: A Case for Adaptation Governance in Building Climate Resilience*, World Bank, Report No. 64635; Maximillian Ashwill et al., *Gender Dynamics and Climate Change in Rural Bolivia*, World Bank, November 2011.

³⁰¹ On water insecurity, see: IPCC, *Fourth Assessment Report*, 2007. On the labor burden on women, see: Robin Mearns and Andrew Norton, eds., *The Social Dimensions of Climate Change: Equity and Vulnerability in a Warming World*, World Bank, 2010.

³⁰² See for example: UNICEF, *Climate Change and Children: A human security challenge*, Policy Review Paper, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in cooperation with UNICEF Programme Division, 2008, www.unicef-irc.org/publications. See also: Baten and Khan (2010), Bartlett (2008), Campbell (2009), and Brody et al. (2008), cited in Christian Nellemann et al., op. cit., pp. 38, 46 and 51.

and marriages are not arranged with people in hard-hit areas.³⁰³ Other ricochet effects of climate change include food insecurity and health concerns. Women may turn to “survival sex” to provide for their families.³⁰⁴ Children may face an increased risk of health issues and economic and sexual exploitation and abuse.³⁰⁵

In order to prevent, mitigate and address protection concerns, the entire cycle of disaster and climate risk management planning and implementation should incorporate gender- and age-based approaches that take into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of women, men and children. To this effect, we now turn to some examples at the national, local and multilateral levels which show progress made and remaining challenges.

SECTION 2

Filling the Void: Women as Agents of Disaster Risk Management

Incorporating gender into disaster risk management efforts requires a rights-based approach at all levels of governance.³⁰⁶ While many UN agencies and international organizations have sought to incorporate gender into their policies, government efforts to incorporate gender into their national HFA plans are lackluster. To date, gender has only been incorporated into a fraction of national Hyogo Framework for Action plans: in 2009, only 20 percent of countries reported significant achievements incorporating gender into DRM, with no improvement by 2011.³⁰⁷ In support of HFA implementation efforts to this effect, UNISDR published in 2009 *Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines*.³⁰⁸

While there are some national, local and other DRR or DM policies that include gender components or are gender-sensitive, most national policies tend to focus on disaster response rather than disaster management.³⁰⁹ Some exceptions include India’s National Disaster Management Guidelines (2007) for the development of state disaster management

³⁰³ Example from ActionAid Bangladesh, cited in Hannah Reid et al., *Up in smoke? Asia and the Pacific: The threat from climate change to human development and the environment*, 2007, p. 23.

³⁰⁴ See discussion on: “Gender and Climate Change,” in Hannah Reid et al., *Up in smoke? Asia and the Pacific: The threat from climate change to human development and the environment. The fifth report from the Working Group on Climate Change and Development*, 2007, pp. 22-23, <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10020IIED.pdf>

³⁰⁵ See further: Emily Pollock, *Child Rights and Climate Change Adaptation: Voices from Kenya and Cambodia*, Children in a Changing Climate, February 2010; Christian Nellemann et al., op. cit.

³⁰⁶ OHCHR has examined how climate change impacts identified by IPCC have implications for the enjoyment of human rights and for the obligations of states under international human rights law. See: United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Relationship between Climate Change and Human Rights, A/HRC/10/61*, 15 January 2009. See also: Oxfam International, “Climate Wrongs and Human Rights: Putting People at the Heart of Climate-Change Policy,” Oxfam Briefing Paper No. 117.

³⁰⁷ UNISDR, 2011 *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction. Revealing Risk: Redefining Development. Summary and Main Findings*, p. 10, www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/2011/en/home/executive.html

³⁰⁸ UNISDR, UNDP and IUCN, *Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive: Policy and Practical Guidelines*, 2009.

³⁰⁹ UNISDR, op. cit., p. 10.

plans, which call for both the participation of women in disaster planning and recognition of women as agents in disaster management.³¹⁰ India's National Policy on Disaster Management (2009) recognizes the vulnerability of women and other groups and mandates the inclusion of women in State Disaster Response Forces, the participation of women and youth in decision-making during community-based disaster preparedness, and charges states with providing for the "permanent" restoration of livelihoods for female-headed households, among other marginalized and vulnerable groups.³¹¹ Japan's Basic Guidelines for Reconstruction (2011), adopted in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, state the aim to promote the participation of "women in all platforms and organizations of reconstruction, from the perspective of a gender equal society."³¹² As a 2011 study for the HFA Mid-Term Review notes, at the regional level, the Center for the Prevention of Natural

Pastoralist Boran Women in Ethiopia: Community Leaders for Drought Resiliency

Capacity building – including literacy and numeracy skills, and microenterprise training – was provided to pastoralist women's savings and loan groups in southern Ethiopia from 2000 to 2004 as part of the Pastoral Risk Management (PARIMA) project of the Global Livestock Collaborative Research Support Program. As a result of this initiative in impoverished communities on the Borana Plateau – hard-hit by drought in 1983-1985, 1991-1993, 1998-1999 – women (and communities as a whole) facing the 2005-2008 drought cycle were more resilient to chronic drought, with preserved assets, access to income and improved food security.

Using a community-based approach to tackle the issues their communities identified, poor women emerged as leaders, overcoming domestic burdens. As leaders, they engaged in local collective action, inspired from their participation in cross-border tours between their communities and those of Kenyan women leaders. The emergence of female leaders among the Boran shows that traditional gender roles are not always static: "It was...highly unexpected given that women have been typically relegated to performing menial tasks and having a low social profile in this society. Traditional gender roles are distinct for the Boran."

Disasters in Central America (CEPRENAC), an inter-governmental body, stands out for its efforts to bring together national disaster management and other government authorities with grassroots women's organizations to jointly review and develop DRR strategies.³¹³ The

³¹⁰ Government of India, National Disaster Management Authority, *National Disaster Management Guidelines: Preparation of State Disaster Management Plans*, July 2007, Sec. 7.1 and 8.2, www.adrc.asia/documents/dm_information/india_plan02.pdf

³¹¹ Government of India, *National Policy on Disaster Management*, 2009, Sec. 1.2.2; Sec. 3.4.5; Sec. 5.3.2; Sec. 9.5.1, www.preventionweb.net/files/12733_NationalDisasterManagementPolicy2009.pdf

³¹² Government of Japan, *Disaster Prevention and Reconstruction from a Gender Equal Society Perspective - Lessons from the Great East Japan Earthquake. From the "White Paper on Gender Equality 2012" Summary*, June 2012, p. 13.

³¹³ Suranjana Gupta and Irene S. Leung, *Turning Good Practices into Institutional Mechanisms: Investing in grassroots women's leadership to scale up local implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action: An*

UNDP has noted that while regional bodies such as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and SOPAC Division of Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) have begun to address the gender aspects of climate risk management, "...much work remains to be done in order to consistently incorporate a gender perspective into ongoing disaster preparedness and management in Caribbean and Pacific island communities."³¹⁴ At the multilateral level, efforts by the World Bank include the development by the East Asia and Pacific department of regional guidance on gender-sensitive disaster and climate risk management, in addition to the provision of capacity building to Bank staff and partners, and country-level policy analysis.³¹⁵

In practice, disaster risk management processes across the board largely exclude the work already being done by women. A meeting of leading women experts at the birthplace of the Hyogo Framework for Action called on SRSRG Margareta Wahlström to exert pressure for gender equality in disaster risk reduction. Former Governor of Chiba Prefecture in Japan, Akiko Domoto, remarked at the meeting: "A lot of actual work is being done by women, but not integrated into policies and the decision-making process. It's a challenge for women to be visible. In disaster risk reduction, more social issues need to be advanced, not just infrastructure related issues."³¹⁶

This gap is evident around the world. According to a 2009 Huairou Commission survey, women's civil society organizations active in DRR in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa region felt excluded from national emergency preparedness and other disaster risk reduction programs.³¹⁷ In terms of climate change negotiations, processes and institutions, similar trends in the lack of women's formal participation, despite significant local-level engagement, are prevalent.³¹⁸

While women's grassroots disaster and climate risk management efforts often go unrecognized beyond local levels, there are many examples of women playing DRM leadership roles in their communities. Women leaders around the world, including in the

in-depth study for the HFA Mid-Term Review, Huairou Commission and GROOTS International, 2011, p. 10, www.unisdr.org/files/18197_201guptaandleung.theoleofwomenasaf.pdf

³¹⁴ Lynette S. Joseph-Brown and Dawn Tuiloma-Sua, *Integrating Gender in Disaster Management in Small Island Developing States: A Guide*, 2012, p. 3, www.undppc.org/fj/_resources/article/files/Checklist_gender_DRM_and_SIDS_web.pdf

³¹⁵ Helene Carlsson Rex, Zoe Trohanis, *Making Women's Voices Count: Integrating Gender Issues in Disaster Risk Management*, World Bank, Operational Guidance Notes, 2011; World Bank, *Making Women's Voices Count: Integrating Gender Issues in Disaster Risk Management—Overview & Resources for Guidance Notes*, 2012, www.worldbank.org/eapdisasters; see also: World Bank, *Gender and Climate Change: Three Things You Should Know*, 2011.

³¹⁶ UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, "Japanese experts call for gender equality," 16 October 2012, <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/japanese-experts-call-gender-equality>

³¹⁷ Huairou Commission (HC), "Women's Views from the Frontline," 2009, www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=10154

³¹⁸ Christine Haigh and Bernadette Vallely, *Gender and the Climate Change Agenda: The impacts of climate change on women and public policy*, Women's Environmental Network, 2010; Christian Nellemann et al., (eds), *Women at the Frontline of Climate Change: Gender Risks and Hopes. A Rapid Response Assessment*, 2011, pp. 31-33; *Streamlining Climate Change and Gender: Gender Equality*, Climate Caucus, accessed 7 March 2013, www.climatecaucus.net/gender_equality_rec.htm

political arena, are serving as agents to reduce the risks associated with natural hazards and with climate change. For instance, Mauritania's first female mayor, Abdel Malick, was elected in 2001 and has since championed disaster risk reduction. The capital – which includes her municipality of 60,000 inhabitants, Tevragh-Zeinato, is experiencing rapid urbanization and is vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including sea level rise. To address these issues, in 2011 she joined the UNISDR “Making Cities Resilient

Campaign.” Through this campaign, she has organized several programs and campaigns with community participation, including schools, youth groups and women's groups, in mitigation and preparedness measures.³¹⁹ Gender-sensitive DRR efforts in Mauritania should be understood within the broader political and socioeconomic situation of women in the country.³²⁰ The fact that there were no women's groups participating in national DRR platforms, as revealed in Mauritania's 2013 report on its implementation of the HFA, reflects the trend found in the above-mentioned Huairou Commission survey.³²¹

There is ample evidence that women are actively involved as agents of DRM – in preparation, response and reconstruction efforts.³²² These roles are in addition to their domestic tasks and, in many cases, paid work. Domestic workloads increase for women after disasters, and disasters affect the type of work men and women are able to secure.³²³ In disaster contexts around the world, women have been effective community volunteers for disaster preparedness and mitigation, search-and-rescuers before official responders arrived, sources of community solidarity for coping after a disaster, professional service providers and political organizers for job and housing equity, among other roles and activities.³²⁴ For example, following the Spitak earthquake in Turkey, girls and young women located over 70,000 displaced persons, even though many had lost relatives themselves: “Victim/survivors themselves, they ‘survived psychologically by becoming active in their own rehabilitation.’”³²⁵

UNISDR points to several examples of women engaging at the community level in DRM. For example, in Cuttack, India, the women's group Mahila Milan leads disaster risk reduction efforts in informal settlements, through accurate, disaggregated digitalized risk mapping for urban development planning undertaken in partnership with local slum dweller

³¹⁹ UNISDR, “Mauritania's trailblazer for women and resilience,” www.unisdr.org/archive/30064

³²⁰ See for example: World Bank, *REPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE DE MAURITANIE: Evaluation Stratégique des Enjeux en matière de Genre en Mauritanie*, Report No. 39233, 2007.

³²¹ Government of Mauritania, Mauritania: *Rapport national de suivi sur la mise en oeuvre du Cadre d'action de Hyogo (2011-2013)*, 28 January 2013, www.preventionweb.net/files/31058_mrt_NationalHFAprogress_2011-13.pdf

³²² See examples from Honduras, Canada, United States, Australia, South Africa, India, Mexico, and further discussion in: Elaine Enarson, Gender and Natural Disasters, International Labor Organization, Working Paper No. 1, September 2000, www.ilo.int/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---ifp_crisis/documents/publication/wcms_116391.pdf

³²³ *Ibid.*

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

³²⁵ Quote from R.A. Ayvazova and B.V. Mehrabian, 1995, “Post-disaster initiatives in traditional society: Armenian women after ‘Spitak’ earthquake,” *Stop Disasters* 24, p. 13, cited in Elaine Enarson, *Gender and Natural Disasters*, International Labor Organization, 2000, p. 16.

federations. City authorities use the digital maps, and data is used “to negotiate support for upgrading or relocating houses, thus reducing disaster risk.”³²⁶ In addition, UNISDR’s 2012 *Making Cities Resilient* report cites numerous examples of the involvement of vulnerable community groups, including women, in disaster risk management processes at the local level in various cities around the world – including in Santa Tecla, El Salvador; Albay, Makati and Quezón, Philippines; Thimphu, Bhutan; Bhubaneswar, India; and San Francisco, United States.³²⁷

Disaster and climate risk management policies and programs should not only involve the participation of women in their development, but efforts must also be taken to ensure that women are well-informed about them. A 2009 Huairou Commission survey of grassroots women’s organizations found that, “While governments have reported that they have comprehensive DM programs, women consistently stated that they were not aware of disaster management programs at the national level, nor did they understand what resources or entitlements were available through their government programs.”³²⁸

As the above analysis shows, in many instances, women already engage effectively in disaster and climate risk management, but there is a huge disconnect between their work and equitable integration into all stages of decision-making processes, policies and programs. As long as women are excluded from effective engagement at such levels, gender inequities will be persistent, and countries will not recover as quickly from both the major and chronic economic shocks that disasters and climate change impacts engender.

Perhaps as part of a broader trend to ‘build back better’ after a disaster occurs, some international agencies have seen the possibility of expanding women’s traditional roles in post-disaster response and recovery.³²⁹ As the Borana example above demonstrates, women may have more access to capacity-building programs and more and different livelihood opportunities in the aftermath of a disaster. In at least a few cases, particularly in high-visibility mega-disasters, women may end up with better housing or more tools than they would have otherwise had. The loss of husbands and fathers may lead to women assuming new roles within family structures and to changing power dynamics between women and men. Rather than counting on their husbands to grow food and build structures, for example, they may come to rely on humanitarian assistance. While their work often

³²⁶ UNISDR, *How To Make Cities More Resilient: A Handbook For Local Government Leaders*, March 2012, p. 35, www.unisdr.org/files/26462_handbookfinalonlineversion.pdf

³²⁷ UNISDR, *Making cities resilient report 2012: My city is getting ready! A global snapshot of how local governments reduce disaster risk*, second ed., October 2012, <http://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/toolkit/report2012>; Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative, “Local stakeholders in Makati validate risk analysis results,” 6 August 2009, www.emi-megacities.org/home/projects/143-ffo/656-local-stakeholders-in-makati-validate-risk-analysis-results.html

³²⁸ Huairou Commission, “Women’s Views from the Frontline,” p. 3, www.preventionweb.net/files/10154_10154_WomensViewsFromtheFrontline.pdf

³²⁹ See: World Bank, *Handbook for Estimating the Socio-Economic and Environmental Effects of Disasters*, 2003, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTDISMGMT/Resources/10women.pdf>; see also: UNDP, *Gender and Disasters*, October 2010, <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/disaster/7Disaster%20Risk%20Reduction%20-%20Gender.pdf>; PAHO, “Gender and Natural Disasters,” PAHO Factsheet: Women, Health and Development Program, <http://www.paho.org/english/hdp/hdw/genderdisasters.PDF>

increases – standing in lines for water or food, searching for fuel, caring for injured relatives – the workload of the traditional head of household may decrease. It is important not to overstate the case that disasters offer ‘silver linings’ for women. But disasters have a way of shaking up traditional structures in ways that may provide, at least in the short term, different possibilities for women.

SECTION 3

Recommendations and Conclusion

We now turn to a few recommendations for relevant stakeholders, to achieve sustainable gains in disaster and climate risk management by incorporating gender-based approaches. These recommendations are mutually reinforcing.

- ❖ **Promote and provide incentives for the meaningful participation of women in disaster and climate risk management, including in leadership roles**

Women should be effectively engaged in disaster and climate risk management prevention, planning, decision-making and implementation efforts. As a study commissioned for the 2010-2011 HFA Mid-Term Review recommended, governments’ engagement of women’s civil society organizations should be incentivized as a way to overcome their exclusion from decision-making.³³⁰ Providing adequate and timely support to women’s existing work, and ensuring their meaningful participation at local, national, regional and international levels, is critical to addressing gender inequities, with benefits for long-term, sustainable risk management and overall development gains. This means that governments and international humanitarian actors must devote time to identifying women’s associations and networks which are active in the community and creating mechanisms for their effective participation. Often, it is simply not effective to invite representatives of women’s groups to come to a meeting – particularly when most of the participants in the meeting are men. Rather, efforts must be taken to enable women to feel comfortable about putting forward their ideas.³³¹ Finding successful ways of engaging women takes time – more time than identifying traditional community leaders. And time is always difficult to find in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. For this reason, engaging women in longer-term work associated with disaster risk reduction and recovery efforts is more likely to be accepted and successful.

- ❖ **Ensure the implementation of a rights-based approach to disaster preparedness, response and recovery activities, using the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Operational Guidelines on the Protection of**

³³⁰ Gupta and Leung, *Turning Good Practices into Institutional Mechanisms: Investing in grassroots women’s leadership to scale up local implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action: An in-depth study for the HFA Mid-Term Review*, 2011, p. 26.

³³¹ Some humanitarian agencies have found it useful, for example, to organize focus groups for women only or to deploy female staff to reach out to women in affected communities.

Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters (2011) and other existing guidelines on humanitarian standards in situations of natural disasters.³³²

The Operational Guidelines cover measures for:

1. Protection of life; security and physical integrity of the person; and family ties;
2. Protection of rights related to the provision of food; health; shelter; and education;
3. Protection of rights related to housing; land and property; livelihoods; secondary and higher education; and
4. Protection of rights related to documentation; movement; re-establishment of family ties; expression and opinion; and elections.

These guidelines offer clear guidance to humanitarian actors and provide concrete examples of how to translate them into practice. For example, agencies can consider including women in food distribution teams and setting up separate lines and distribution points where cultural traditions limit women's mobility in public spaces.

As the Operational Guidelines emphasize, "Often, negative impacts on the human rights concerns after a natural disaster do not arise from purposeful policies but are the result of inadequate planning and disaster preparedness, inappropriate policies and measures to respond to the disasters, or simple neglect."³³³ Too often, national government officials and international agencies do not 'see' the needs of affected communities through a gender lens. And, yet, in order to ensure that the rights of all individuals affected by a disaster are upheld, a gender-specific approach is necessary.

In spite of almost ten years of work to raise the visibility of human rights in disaster situations and hundreds of pages of guidelines and manuals, the importance of awareness of gender aspects in DRM policies and practice cannot be overestimated. When those working in all phases of disaster risk management are aware of gender realities, they are more likely to develop and implement policies and programs that not only meet the specific needs of women and men, but that also tap into their invaluable capacities.

❖ **Collect and maintain gender-disaggregated data**

Governments and all organizations involved in disaster and climate risk management efforts must do a better job of collecting and maintaining data disaggregated by sex, age and other key characteristics. This data should inform assessments, strategies, policies, programs and monitoring and evaluation. Without this critical

³³² IASC, *Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters*, Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, January 2011, (adopted by the IASC in 2010), www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2011/01/06-operational-guidelines-nd

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

data to inform policy and planning, risks may not be adequately or effectively mitigated, thereby wasting precious financial and human resources. According to the 2010-2011 HFA Mid-Term Review, initial data from the 2009-2011 HFA Monitor indicate that 62 out of 70 countries do not collect vulnerability and capacity information disaggregated by gender.³³⁴ Hence, it is clear that collecting such data is a critical starting point for implementing a systematic, gender-sensitive approach to risk management. Governments should insist that their DRM programs collect gender-disaggregated data. Donors should require – and support – those they fund to collect information organized by gender and other relevant categories.

❖ **Conduct further research on gender and disaster and climate risk management**

While there has been a laudable increase in reporting on gender and natural disasters and climate change, particularly in recent years, there is still a dearth of gender-based analysis in existing risk reporting, assessments and evaluations that are not specifically focused on gender. For example, the IPCC's 2003 report failed to include gender considerations in its cross-cutting themes, and there is no attention to gender or women in its 2007 Synthesis report. The Urban Risk Assessment, developed by the World Bank, with UN-Habitat, UNEP and Cities Alliance, only mentions women in its suggestions for urban risk mapping which should take into account vulnerable groups, including "women-headed households," and "gender" as one of the variables which indicate household resiliency, to use in socioeconomic assessments.³³⁵ However, the reporting on the case studies lacked any specific gender analysis.³³⁶ A gender-sensitive approach does not just entail attention paid to or inclusion of women, but also consideration of the needs and capacities of men, which are often overlooked.³³⁷ At the same time, applying a gender analysis only in terms of vulnerabilities often has the effect of de-emphasizing the resources and capacities for leadership which women bring. While it is true that women tend to have specific vulnerabilities, it is also true that not all women are vulnerable. Care must be taken to consider and assess strategies that address the specific needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of men, women, children, and various groups within, as well as how their needs, roles and capacities change over time.

❖ **Ensure the integration of a gender-sensitive approach to disaster and climate risk management in key policies and programs** – including all five priority areas of the HFA, climate risk management plans and programs (e.g., the World Bank's

³³⁴ UNISDR, *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. Mid-Term Review 2010-2011*, March 2011, www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/18197

³³⁵ Developed as part of a Memorandum of Understanding on a joint Cities and Climate Change work program between UN-Habitat, UNEP, and the World Bank, and supported by Cities Alliance.

³³⁶ See: World Bank, *Urban Risk Assessments: An Approach for Understanding Disaster and Climate Risk in Cities*, Working Draft, 2011, pp. 31 and 44. The same language was used in the final report, which includes results from case studies where the URA was piloted. See: Eric Dickson et al., *Urban Risk Assessments: Understanding Disaster and Climate Risk in Cities*, World Bank, 2012, pp. 41 and 56, <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/content/book/9780821389621>

³³⁷ See for example: World Bank, *Gender and Climate Change: Three Things You Should Know*, 2011, p. 7.

country-level Strategic Programs for Climate Resilience), development strategies, and poverty eradication strategies. The need to incorporate DRR into development planning and poverty eradication programs is already widely recognized.³³⁸ There is also greater recognition of the need for a gender-sensitive approach to disaster and climate risk management efforts. This multi-pronged approach to disaster and climate risk reduction will greatly reduce risk for women, men, and children – and by extension, communities and countries as a whole.

Conclusion

As this chapter has recounted, international awareness of the importance of gender in humanitarian and development programs dates back some three decades, and national governments and international organizations have taken important steps to incorporate gender into disaster risk management policies and programs. And yet, in almost every major disaster of the past three decades, there are reports of women facing discrimination or neglect in assistance or recovery planning.³³⁹

Ensuring the integration of gender-sensitive approaches requires more than guidelines and statements of intent.³⁴⁰ It requires the active engagement of civil society, particularly human rights groups and women's associations to monitor both the development and implementation of these policies. National human rights commissions, for example, can play a role in identifying areas where women have been excluded from planning processes. Women's groups can develop mechanisms by which women can come together to identify their common concerns and develop strategies for voice these concerns to those in policy-making positions. International organizations should require reporting by their field staff on the concrete results of women's participation in relevant programs. For their part, donors should ensure that the organizations they fund integrate a gender perspective into all of their work.

Adopting a gender-sensitive approach to disaster risk management is not only an issue of basic human rights but also effective on the practical level. Simply put, policies that ensure that women as well as men are fully involved in planning DRR strategies and are full participants in recovery efforts are more likely to succeed. Disaster response strategies that protect and assist women as well as men are better for the community as a whole. A gender-sensitive approach is also a smart policy in that it enables the resources of all members of an affected community to be fully utilized.

³³⁸ UNISDR, "Towards a Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction," 2012, www.unisdr.org/files/25129_towardsapost2015frameworkfordisaste.pdf

³³⁹ See above text for specific examples, e.g. Haiti, Pakistan.

³⁴⁰ Even in developed countries, such as the United States, there were reports of dramatic increases in sexual and gender-based violence for those displaced by Hurricane Katrina in 2005; see: Chris Kromm and Sue Striggs, *Hurricane Katrina and the Guiding Principles: A Global Human Rights Perspective on a National Disaster*, Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement and Institute for Southern Studies, January 2008, www.brookings.edu/~media/events/2008/1/14%20disasters/0114_isskatrina.pdf