

Beijing Agenda for Global Action on Gender-Sensitive Disaster Risk Reduction

Beijing, China, 22 April 2009

We, the participants of the International Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction from 43 countries, bringing expertise and knowledge from all regions of the world, have met in Beijing, China, from 20-22 April 2009. The conference built on the gains of a series of regional and international events in promoting gender equality in disaster risk reduction, including all gender-sensitive policies, risk assessment, early warning, and success indicators for building resilience of nations and communities to disasters. We acknowledge key regional and international processes and declarations such as Hyogo Framework for Action, Ministerial Conference on disaster risk reduction in Asia and Africa, call for action on gender and climate change by the international colloquium in Liberia, Nairobi Action Plan of Parliamentarians, Beijing Platform for Action, and the Manila Declaration for Global Action on Gender in Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction present consensus among the world political leaders on the critical importance of gender mainstreaming to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

We, the participants from 43 countries, UN agencies and Civil Societies around the world, have carefully reviewed the progress, and identified and agreed upon challenges from a gender perspective under the five themes of the Conference: (1) Promoting policy changes for gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction; (2) Linking disaster risk reduction with poverty reduction from a gender perspective; (3) Making disaster risk reduction a tool for climate change adaptation; (4) Ensuring equal participation of men and women in building community resilience to disasters; and (5) Women and post-disaster relief and reconstruction one year after the Wenchung earthquake in China.

We fully recognize that disasters triggered by natural hazards such as flood, drought, tropical storms, and earthquake are on the rise. Today, the most frequent disasters are climate-related. The rising trend of disasters poses serious challenges for the world to achieve MDG, especially food security, poverty reduction, environment sustainability. International data available highlight disasters hit poor the most although the rich are not necessarily excluded from the impacts.

We are fully aware that women comprise 70% of the world's poor and women are more vulnerable to the impact of disaster due to the existing socio-economic, political and cultural disadvantages. Prevailing policies and frameworks do not adequately recognize and support the crucial role that women play in sustaining household and community economies and social networks. Climate change outcomes will make the daily life of millions of women in developing countries even more difficult, primarily due to environmental degradation. Given these systemic inequities, for effective strategies toward change, men and boys also need to be engaged in positive ways.

We raise concern that gender remains a marginalized issue in the current national and international negotiations around disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

Gender considerations have been hardly applied as fundamental principle in policy and framework development.

We are fully convinced that issues of *gender, poverty reduction, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and post-disaster recovery and reconstruction* that we discussed at this conference are all components of development process. Gender equality is a fundamental development issue, which needs to be integrated and addressed throughout the development process. Disaster risks and the risks arising from climate change and rapid urbanization are challenges that the development process faces to an ever increasing degree.

We need political will and commitment, scientifically-sound approach, policies and programmes, and action plans to address these complex issues. It is important to adopt an innovative and comprehensive approach.

We need integrated development policies, planning and implementation processes which take into account disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation with gender as a cross-cutting issue. We fully promote that multi-stakeholder, multi-sector, multi disciplinary, and multi-level cooperation and collaboration as a win-win option to achieve and sustain gender equality. Only in this way will sustainable development be achievable.

We are all convinced and committed to advocate the importance and need for integrating a gender perspective in policies and programmes in our own capacities as politicians, senior government officials, and development and humanitarian actors.

We, therefore, recommend nine achievable actions before 2015. We request national Governments to make strong commitments in line with international mechanisms:

1. **Increase** political commitment to gender analysis and gender mainstreaming through enhanced cooperation and collaboration between Ministries responsible for disaster risk reduction, climate change, poverty reduction and gender issues, with the participation of civil society;
2. **Develop and review** national policies, relevant laws, strategies, plans and budgets and take immediate action to mainstream gender into national development policies, planning and programmes;
3. **Foster** the linkage between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation from a gender perspective through policy and administrative measures;
4. **Collect** gender-specific data and statistics on impact of disasters, carry out gender-sensitive vulnerability, risk and capacity assessments and develop gender sensitive-indicators to monitor and measure progress;
5. **Increase** awareness of the public and media on the gender-sensitive vulnerabilities and capacities in disasters and gender-specific needs and concerns in disaster risk reduction and management;
6. **Support** research institutions to study the cost-benefit and efficiency of gender-sensitive policies and programmes in disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and poverty reduction;

7. **Secure** the actual application of disaster risk assessments as part of development policy-making and programme formulation to prevent disasters from making the poor even poorer;
8. **Improve and mainstream** a gender perspective and equal participation between men and women in the coordination of disaster preparedness humanitarian response and recovery through capacity building and training; and
9. **Build and enhance** the capacities of professional organizations, communities and pertinent national and local institutions to enable gender mainstreaming into all development sectors.

We, the participants, endorse the nine points listed above and reaffirm our commitment to gender equality as a fundamental development issue, which needs to be integrated and addressed throughout the development process.

We, the participants, require accountability from all development stakeholders, in particular:

Governments, development cooperation partners, especially national committees or platforms for disaster risk reduction, must review and to report their progress in the implementation of the above actions, as part of national reports to UNISDR secretariat for the mid-term review of Hyogo Framework for Action in 2011;

Parliamentarians and counselors must take actions toward ensuring gender mainstreaming in national legislation through policy and budget allocations at national and local levels;

UNISDR secretariat and UNIFEM, in collaboration with other relevant UN agencies, must facilitate the process of mainstreaming a gender perspective into disaster risk reduction and provide technical support to Governments and all stakeholders;

UNISDR secretariat must, in collaboration with other relevant UN agencies, continue to develop tools and methodologies, to build awareness, and to support national processes toward ensuring that gender equality considerations are fully integrated in all disaster management processes and practice;

UNDP, in collaboration with other relevant UN agencies, must provide concrete guidelines and support for making disaster risk assessment and disaster risk reduction as an integral part of poverty reduction strategies and programmes at country and local levels;

The World Bank and the GFDRR must ensure the integration of disaster risk reduction in all development assistance; and

UNFCCC secretariat and UNISDR secretariat must work closely together to provide concrete guidelines for making gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction as part of the Copenhagen strategy for climate change adaptation at COP-15.

We, therefore, recommend that the global initiative on gender and disaster risk reduction should be linked to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and use the biennial Global Platform for disaster risk reduction as a mechanism to monitor and assess the progress made at national level.