



GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



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Key Messages for the 2025 Global Platform on DRR

By the Women and Gender Stakeholder Group (WGSG) of the UNDRR's Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism

Women, girls, and gender-diverse people are disproportionately affected by disasters and compounding risks, including those driven by climate change, biodiversity loss, and conflict. These impacts are not accidental, they are the result of systemic gender inequalities that persist across all sectors and levels of governance. From higher mortality rates during disasters to longer recovery periods and deepening poverty, women and girls continue to bear the brunt of risk, with the effects compounded for those facing intersecting forms of marginalization, such as Indigenous women, women working in informal economy, rural women, women with disabilities, older women, and women in displacement or conflict settings.

Despite evidence of [their leadership and critical role as first responders, knowledge holders, and community organisers](#), women remain underrepresented in decision-making processes in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience-building. Gender-blind policies and investments continue to dominate DRR planning, failing to reflect the differentiated needs, contributions, and priorities of women and girls. Decision-making spaces, including national disaster management authorities, ministries responsible for humanitarian affairs, and global funding mechanisms, are still largely inaccessible to women, especially those from grassroots and frontline communities.

Investments in DRR too often prioritize technical and financial considerations without addressing how structural gender inequalities affect risk exposure, resilience, and recovery capacity. Moreover, financing for gender equality in DRR remains fragmented, insufficient, and largely disconnected from the realities and leadership of women-led organizations and feminist movements, who remain underfunded and systematically sidelined in resilience-building efforts.

As the international community gathers for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2025, the Women and Gender Stakeholder Group asserts that equitable, inclusive, and transformative DRR cannot be achieved without the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women and girls in all their diversity. This document outlines the priorities, policy asks, and accountability mechanisms needed to ensure that gender equality is central, not peripheral, to risk-informed development and the implementation of the Sendai Framework and its successor.

Operating Policy Context: Global Landscape for Gender Equality in Disaster Risk Reduction

Gender equality is foundational to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is integral to this agenda, particularly in SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). [CEDAW General Recommendation No. 37 \(2018\)](#) explicitly links disasters, pandemics, and women's rights, emphasizing the principles of substantive equality, non-discrimination, participation, empowerment, accountability, and access to justice in the context of DRR and climate change.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 recognizes that women's participation and leadership are critical for effectively managing disaster risk and for designing, resourcing, and implementing gender-sensitive policies, plans, and programs across all phases of disaster risk management. It calls for the integration of gender, age, disability, and cultural perspectives in all policies and practices. The Sendai Framework Gender Action Plan (GAP), launched on 18 March 2024, provides a roadmap to accelerate progress towards gender equality in DRR. It identifies nine key objectives aligned with the four priorities of the Sendai Framework and recommends 33 actions to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in DRR.

The 2023 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR 2023) highlights that disasters disproportionately affect women and girls, exacerbating existing gender inequalities. The report underscores the need for gender-responsive DRR strategies to build resilience and reduce vulnerabilities. The Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework (2023) reveals that while progress has been made, significant gaps remain in integrating gender equality into DRR policies and practices. Despite evidence of women's leadership and critical roles in disaster response and recovery, they remain underrepresented in decision-making positions within disaster management institutions. Funding for gender equality in DRR is often inadequate, and women-led organizations are frequently underfunded and underutilized. The review calls for enhanced efforts to ensure women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in DRR decision-making processes.

A significant gap in current DRR frameworks remains the failure to meaningfully integrate intersectionality. While the impacts of disasters are often assessed in gendered terms, there is limited recognition that not all women experience these impacts in the same way. The absence of an intersectional approach obscures the layered realities faced by women and gender-diverse people whose experiences of risk and recovery are shaped by multiple, intersecting identities, including race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, socioeconomic status, and migration status. As a result, the unique barriers faced by groups such as Indigenous women, who may encounter linguistic and cultural exclusion in emergency response; trans and non-binary individuals, who may be denied access to shelters or health services; and women with disabilities, who are often excluded from early warning systems due to inaccessibility,

are frequently overlooked. This lack of nuance in DRR policy making and implementation perpetuates structural inequalities, leaving the most marginalized at greater risk before, during, and after disasters.

Regional Policy Context: Africa

Building on global momentum for gender-responsive disaster risk reduction (DRR), Africa is gradually advancing the integration of gender equality into its DRR frameworks. At the 19th Session of the Africa Working Group on DRR in March 2023, UN Women ESARO was tasked with [reviewing and recommending ways to strengthen gender considerations in the Programme of Action \(PoA\)](#) for implementing the Sendai Framework in Africa. The review report produced concrete recommendations to ensure the revised PoA and its upcoming implementation matrix are gender-responsive. These recommendations align closely with the newly launched Sendai Framework Gender Action Plan (GAP). The 9th session Africa Regional Platform delivered the [Windhoek Declaration on advancing the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa](#), which called call upon Member States, regional economic communities, the African Union Commission, and other stakeholders to carry out the [Gender Action Plan to Support Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030](#) at all levels.

This regional momentum is both timely and urgent. Across the African continent, disasters, especially those driven by climate change, environmental degradation, and conflict are becoming more frequent and severe, disproportionately affecting women and girls. These impacts are not only the result of physical exposure to hazards, but of deeply entrenched structural inequalities that shape how risk is experienced and mitigated. Gendered social roles; unequal access to land, finance, information, and services; and the invisibilization of women’s knowledge and leadership compound their vulnerability during crises and recovery. For instance, the 2022 and 2023 floods in Nigeria exposed these dynamics, disproportionately affecting rural women whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and informal trade. The crisis increased their caregiving responsibilities and deepened economic insecurity. In response, Nigeria adopted a gender-inclusive disaster risk reduction strategy, offering a valuable example of how gender integration can strengthen national resilience. However, such examples remain rare. Women are still largely excluded from leadership, decision-making, and funding in disaster risk reduction efforts.

Embedding an intersectional lens in Africa’s DRR strategies is not optional — it is critical to effective resilience-building. For example, nomadic women, widows, and women with disabilities often fall through the cracks of mainstream interventions. Their realities cannot be addressed through one-size-fits-all responses. Intersectional data collection and participatory methodologies that center marginalized voices are key to ensuring no one is left behind in disaster preparedness and response. Governments and regional bodies must invest in gender-disaggregated and intersectional data systems to inform policy and measure progress.

Regional Policy Context: Asia-Pacific

The Asia-Pacific region, the most disaster-prone in the world, faces urgent challenges in achieving the 2030 Agenda, particularly in addressing climate change, inequality, and inclusive development. [The 2024 Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Goals Progress Report](#) warns that while some gains have been made in the region, they remain fragile and uneven, with women, girls, Indigenous communities, rural populations, and the urban poor continuing to face systemic barriers. These groups are especially vulnerable to climate and disaster-related risks, as structural gender inequalities limit their access to education, employment, health services, and social protection, severely impacting their ability to recover from disasters.

In climate-vulnerable countries and disaster hotspots across the region, such as Bangladesh, the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, and the Pacific Island States, women are often the first to suffer and the last to recover. Their livelihoods are disproportionately affected due to their dependence on informal economies and climate-sensitive sectors. Their caregiving responsibilities also intensify during crises, heightening their exposure to gender-based violence and deepening their vulnerability. The situation is particularly critical for Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, which face compounding vulnerabilities due to geographic isolation, limited institutional capacity, and economic fragility that widen the resilience gap. Accelerated and collective action that integrates gender-responsive disaster risk reduction into national policies, climate finance, and regional cooperation is vital to advancing both resilience and gender equality across the region.

Despite ongoing challenges, [women in the Asia-Pacific region have consistently led efforts](#) in community resilience, early warning systems, and humanitarian response, yet they remain underrepresented in formal disaster risk reduction (DRR) policymaking and lack adequate funding for their initiatives. To move beyond symbolic participation, the region must institutionalize gender-transformative DRR grounded in disaggregated data, intersectional analysis, and inclusive governance. The implementation of the Sendai Framework Gender Action Plan and regional mechanisms like the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conferences on DRR must drive accountability and systemic change. Aligning DRR with the broader SDG agenda demands urgent political will, investment in gender-responsive systems, and recognition of women's leadership to address structural inequalities and build inclusive, resilient societies.

Regional Policy Context: Europe

In Europe, while awareness and policy commitments toward gender equality have grown, significant gaps remain in women's representation within disaster risk reduction leadership. Despite the presence of progressive frameworks, [women occupy only a fraction of decision-making positions in disaster management and climate sectors](#). Furthermore, investments in risk-informed development often fail to fully consider how

gender inequality impacts the effectiveness of these investments. Women-led organizations are pivotal to community-level resilience and disaster response across Europe, yet they often struggle to access sustainable funding. Studies indicate that nearly seventy percent of these groups face financial barriers, limiting their ability to scale or sustain their work. Strengthening financial and institutional support for women-led initiatives is critical to leveraging their knowledge and reach.

Europe has a robust framework for regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction (DRR), exemplified by the European Union's Civil Protection Mechanism. This mechanism promotes collaborative efforts among member states to enhance disaster response capabilities. Incorporating gender perspectives into this regional cooperation framework can strengthen the overall resilience and ensure that the unique needs of women and girls are addressed. A 2022 analysis by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) indicated that only 35% of regional DRR projects had a dedicated gender component.

To close existing gaps, European countries must invest in gender-responsive education, training, and capacity-building programs. These efforts should equip women with leadership skills and tools to actively shape disaster risk management. At the same time, compliance with international frameworks like the Sendai Framework and CEDAW must be deepened through domestic action. Translating these commitments into practice remains a challenge, as only forty percent of EU countries have fully integrated them into national policies. By aligning DRR efforts with gender equality objectives, Europe has the opportunity to enhance resilience while advancing sustainable and inclusive development.

Regional Policy Context: Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the world's most disaster-prone regions, experiencing significant human and economic losses each year. The increasing risks driven by industrial development, population growth, and the impacts of climate change underscore the importance of effective disaster risk management. With a population of over 652 million people in 2023, around 51 percent of whom are women, the region's high urbanization rates add complexity to vulnerability and resilience strategies. Although there have been promising efforts to integrate gender perspectives into disaster risk reduction, these initiatives are not yet systematic. Rural women and girls, in particular, face compounded challenges due to limited participation in decision-making, restricted access to financial services, and poor access to healthcare and education, reducing their ability to prepare for and respond to disasters.

In 2023, the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Network for Disaster Risk Reduction launched a strategic initiative "Gender Observatory" to promote women's participation in disaster risk management in the context of the VIII Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean (RP23), through the establishment of the RP23 Gender Observatory. The [Gender Observatory](#) gathers and analyzes data on gender mainstreaming and intersectionality throughout regional and global platforms. This

included assessing gender parity among panelists and participants in both plenary and parallel sessions, as well as monitoring interventions and discussions related to disaster risk management and reduction across all RP23 spaces.

International and regional agreements have laid important foundations for advancing gender equality in disaster contexts. The [Montevideo Strategy by ECLAC](#) sets out a comprehensive framework that includes gender equality, women's rights, and disaster risk management within its sustainable development agenda. It promotes institutionalized civil society participation and calls for gender-responsive policies across all governance levels. Similarly, The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Central American Integration System have developed gender policies that recognize the need for gender-focused indicators and strategies in disaster risk management. Despite these frameworks and promising initiatives for integrating a gender perspective into disaster risk reduction (DRR), there is still a significant road ahead for this to become a systematic practice in the region. Greater commitment is needed to translate policy into practice and ensure women's leadership and needs are fully reflected in disaster risk reduction efforts.

Intersectionality is particularly urgent in Latin America and the Caribbean, where layered inequalities converge in contexts of high violence, displacement, and institutional fragility. Afro-descendant, Indigenous, and migrant women face legal and systemic barriers that heighten their disaster vulnerability. Women who speak Indigenous languages, for instance, are often excluded from risk communication efforts, while LGBTQ+ communities face stigma and violence in shelters. A rights-based, intersectional approach to DRR must not only recognize these exclusions but actively work to dismantle them through inclusive policy design, budget allocation, and accountability mechanisms.

Key Recommendations

Based on the evidence and analysis presented, the following recommendations are proposed to ensure gender-responsive and equitable disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience-building:

- 1. Address structural inequalities revealed by disasters:** Recognize and respond to the ways in which disasters are caused. Expose and deepen pre-existing gender, racial, and structural inequalities. Policies, strategies, and programs must be designed to reflect the differentiated impacts of disasters on women, men, girls, boys, and gender-diverse individuals.
- 2. Institutionalize the Sendai GAP with resources and capacity:** Governments should embed the Sendai Framework Gender Action Plan (GAP) into national development and disaster risk reduction policies, plans, and investments. This must be accompanied by sustained capacity-building for government officials and communities, prioritizing the leadership of women and marginalized groups in local DRR efforts. To ensure impact, at least 30% of **traceable** DRR budgets

should be earmarked for gender-responsive initiatives and women-led organizations, complemented by targeted international financing for gender, climate, and disaster resilience.

3. **Advance feminist financing mechanisms for resilience:** Public and private financing for DRR must be restructured to dismantle the systemic exclusion of women and gender-diverse communities from climate and disaster governance. Governments and international donors should co-design and implement feminist financing instruments including community grants, participatory budgeting, and direct investment in women-led initiatives that prioritize social protection, care systems, and collective resilience. Funding flows must be transparent, flexible, and community-accessible, with simplified application processes and decision-making power centered in the hands of local actors. Gender-responsive budgeting should be made mandatory across DRR sectors, with clear indicators and public tracking systems to measure transformative impact.
4. **Anchor DRR in human rights frameworks:** DRR must protect and promote human rights and be grounded in principles of inclusivity, transparency, accountability, participation, and non-discrimination. The differentiated immediate (practical) and long-term (strategic) needs of diverse gender groups must inform DRR priorities, policies, and actions. All DRR policies, tools, and institutional frameworks should be required to adopt intersectional methodologies that consider race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, migration status, and socioeconomic class. This includes mandating intersectional impact assessments during risk mapping, policy design, and emergency response planning.
5. **Promote women's leadership and participation in DRR governance:** Ensure the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in shaping DRR conceptual and methodological frameworks, including in critical areas such as Early Warning for All (EW4A), Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), health systems resilience, climate change adaptation, and risk and vulnerability assessments. Commit to achieving 50% representation of women in senior leadership and decision-making roles within Disaster Management Offices, Ministries of Humanitarian Affairs, and all relevant DRR institutions by 2030. This commitment should be embedded in law and reflected in governance frameworks, institutional reforms, and accountability mechanisms to ensure sustained progress and transformative change.
6. **Invest in gender-responsive capacity building for DRR:** Strengthen women's knowledge, skills, and leadership in disaster risk management by investing in inclusive education, training, and awareness programs that enable their meaningful participation at all levels, from community to national and regional decision-making. All DRR-related training initiatives should include mandatory, gender-specific

modules that address power dynamics, intersectionality, and practical tools for implementing gender-responsive planning, response, and recovery.

7. **Recognize, leverage, and reward women’s caregiving roles and local knowledge:** Acknowledge women’s roles as primary caregivers and community organizers, which provide them with critical knowledge, experience, and skills in managing risk. Actively engage women as agents of change by institutionalizing their leadership and participation in the design, implementation, and monitoring of DRR strategies at all levels.
8. **Institutionalize sex, age, and diversity-disaggregated data collection:** Establish robust data systems that generate and use sex, age, and socially disaggregated data to inform targeted DRR interventions. Such data is critical for designing inclusive policies that reach and benefit all members of society. Adopt and use DRR Gender Observatory during regional and global platforms to promote transparency and accountability, facilitate the exchange of experiences, and systematically monitor progress on gender commitments under the Sendai Framework and its GAP.
9. **Mandate comprehensive gender analyses in all DRR strategies:** Require that all national and regional DRR strategies include a rigorous gender analysis and demonstrate how gender perspectives and considerations are integrated across risk assessment, planning, budgeting, and implementation. Regular gender audits should assess compliance and inform course correction.
10. **Translate international framework commitments into local action:** Governments must go beyond ratifying global frameworks by fully domesticating and operationalizing instruments like the Sendai Framework, CEDAW General Recommendation 37, and the Paris Agreement. This requires context-specific implementation strategies with gender equality at the core, supported by robust accountability systems, regular reporting, gender audits, and use of public transparency tools reporting to ensure alignment with international commitments.

Conclusion

Disasters expose and deepen existing gender inequalities, with women and girls in all their diversity bearing the brunt while being excluded from decision-making. From Africa to Asia-Pacific to Europe, the message is clear: gender-blind disaster risk governance is failing. It is time to move beyond rhetoric to bold, sustained action. Gender equality must be fully embedded in Disaster Risk Reduction frameworks, financing, and leadership. A just, resilient future depends on funding women-led solutions, institutionalizing gender parity, and upholding rights-based, inclusive approaches to reimagine the system entirely. GP2025 should reframe disaster risk reduction as an act of collective care, justice, and liberation.

About the Women and Gender Stakeholder Group

The Women and Gender Stakeholder Group (WGSG) is one of the 15 groups coordinated under the Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism (SEM), engaging in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The membership of the WGSG is open to any gender advocates and organizations working on the intersection of gender equality and disaster risk reduction. The group is convened by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and Action Aid. To join the WGSG, [fill out this registration form](#).