

Sendai Call to Action on Gender and Diversity in DRR

Towards the Post-Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA2)



*The Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
2015 March, Sendai Japan*

June 14, 2014

Japan Women's Network for Disaster Risk Reduction (JWNDRR)

and

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On June 14, 2014 the *Japan Women's Network on Disaster Risk Reduction* (JWNDRR) convened a roundtable on Gender Equality and Diversity in Disaster Risk Reduction, and calls for the inclusion of the following in HFA2 at the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015:

HFA Priority Area 1: Governance/Institutions

Recommendation 1: Diversify Policy-making and Decision-making

Action 1: ensure the participation of a minimum of 30% women and 30% men from diverse sectors, training and expertise, and of diverse ages and family formations, in all national, prefectural, and municipal policy-making and decision-making bodies dealing with Disaster Risk Reduction.

Action 2: encourage male leadership to actively reduce and remove barriers to women by providing mentorship and access to resources that strengthen women's leadership in all aspects of disaster risk reduction.

HFA Priority Area 2: Risk Assessments and Monitoring

Recommendation 2: Apply Evidence-based Risk Assessments

Action 1: carry out participatory community-based disaster risk assessments and follow-up research to formulate diversity and gender-equal policies.

Action 2: conduct monitoring and evaluation of policies integrating gender and diversity and subsequently hold (annual, if necessary) participatory practices of national law reform and national policy-making to apply lessons learned in gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness.

Action 3: ensure opportunities for diverse members of the population to actively contribute their expertise, experience and knowledge to the creation of a risk-wise culture that embraces multiple perspectives and knowledge bases.

Recommendation 3: Track Demographics and Integrate Diversity

Action 1: collect reliable and comparable demographic data that tracks gender, age, economic status, disability, mother tongue, among other relevant factors, based on individualized (not household) survey participation.

Action 2: ensure accessibility of information and services through all phases of disaster prevention, response, recovery and reconstruction to all members of society.

Action 3: strengthen support systems to prevent violence in society, specifically against women and marginalized populations.

Action 4: assure gender-specific health services in medical care and public welfare services, ensuring Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), through all stages of life.

Action 5: train and partner with local medical personnel, including midwives, doctors and support staffs to secure the provision of effective mental health services, including psychological care, for disaster victims..

Action 6: provide evacuation and shelter services supporting work at overcoming specific barriers such as violence against women and sexual minorities, language barriers (Braille, sign language, minority languages) and mobility/accessibility barriers (persons with disabilities).

HFA Priority Area 3: Foster Resilience through Risk Education and Culture

Recommendation 4: Move Beyond Gender and Socio-cultural Stereotypes

Action 1: recognize the resilience and strengths of women and girls, and support them as key "actors" and "leaders" in all phases of disaster risk reduction to ensure that their knowledge, expertise and capacities can contribute to fostering family and community resilience.

Action 2: recognize the vulnerability of men and boys, and acknowledge that gender equality requires commitments to services and programs that address the diverse realities and experiences of women and men in pre and post-disaster contexts.

Recommendation 5: Communicate Risk at all Levels

Action 1: Member states should ensure effective training and drills that accommodate special needs and marginalized communities, such that neighbors and communities will aid each other during disasters;

Action 2: Member states should make annual public investments in media outreach, public education, and civic literacy on the importance of pursuing a democratic and inclusive culture of safety that is gender equal, and that publicly acknowledges the vulnerabilities and strengths found within the diverse communities contributing to the social, political and economic vibrancy of the country.

HFA Priority Area 4: Reduce Underlying Risk Factors

Recommendation 6: Promote Sustainable Development

Action 1: Member states should integrate best practices for environment, climate change and gender-sensitive perspectives in disaster risk reduction policies to protect lives, economic livelihoods, and also foster long-term sustainable development for communities.

Action 2: Member states should pursue renewable energy to reduce dependence upon nuclear power and fossil fuels and consciously reduce the potential for human-induced disasters, such as nuclear accidents and oil spills.

Recommendation 7: Support Women's Economic Empowerment:

Action 1: Member states should conduct time-use surveys and research on unpaid care work, often assumed by women, to ensure that care workers receive recognition and economic benefits for their services.

Action 2: Member states should ensure equality in opportunities for financial access to economic and livelihood support, and ensure environmental viability and equal access to land and resources.

Action 3: Member states should investigate and identify measures to support the economic needs of marginalized and vulnerable members of society, including isolated and remote communities, people with disabilities, those with mobility barriers or severe illness, and those without effective fluency in the dominant language.

Priority Area 5: Strengthen Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response at All Levels

Recommendation 8: Learn Lessons from HFA Implementation

Action 1: Through HFA2, member states should commit to achieving key objectives and targets on the integration of gender equality and inclusive disaster risk reduction strategies and policies throughout all of the Priorities for Action.

(END)

Background Context

Since the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, the *Japan Women's Network on Disaster Risk Reduction* has undertaken law reform activities urging the Government of Japan to advance institutional reform and adopt effective public policies that address gender and diversity. As a result, more policies have taken up women's perspectives than ever before, and certain gains have been made;¹ nonetheless, the past three years have shown that comprehensive mainstreaming of gender into disaster risk reduction (DRR) policy has not occurred and that many challenges and policy gaps remain.

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) adopted at the Second World Conference on Disaster Prevention clearly stated that a gender perspective should be integrated into all policies, plans and decision-making processes with regard to disaster prevention, recovery and rehabilitation. However, 2013 reports indicate that a mere 20% of countries and international organizations have integrated gender into DRR policies. In this context, two Resolutions on "Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Natural Disasters" were adopted, at the 56th (2012) and 58th (2014) Sessions of the Commission on Status of Women (UNCSW). They stipulate the obligation to integrate gender equality into national, regional and local DRR policies, and develop policies that ensure women's participation. As the member state proposing these two UN Resolutions, the Government of Japan has demonstrated leadership in the area of DRR and gender. As the host country of the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (2015), Japan has a responsibility to actively encourage the integration of the content of these UN-CSW Resolutions into the HFA2 agreement, and member states will expect Japan to exercise leadership on these issues.

Japanese women have worked hard to amass valuable experiences and social practices from the experiences of the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake (1995) and Chuetsu Earthquake (2004). The failure to implement institutional reforms prior to the Great East Japan Earthquake has meant that women endured multiple hardships yet again. What we have learned from this is that women are important actors in post-disaster relief activities in all communities. Consistent with the principle of gender equality, the valuable insights that women have gained should be invested in public policy processes and risk reduction programs. Building upon these insights and bringing forward the remaining issues that have yet to be resolved, the Roundtable on Integrating Gender and Diversity into DRR was held on June 14th, 2014. It was preparation for the Third World Conference on DRR, and an attempt to bring forth the common experiences of not only Japanese women, but of women worldwide.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are fundamental principles affecting all disaster risk reduction processes, including disaster mitigation, response, recovery, and reconstruction. Each national government shares responsibility for promoting sustainable development and for developing gender-equal measures that will protect its citizens from the impacts of disasters. Policies at all phases of disaster should integrate commitments and best practices of gender mainstreaming. What was again confirmed in the Great East Japan Earthquake is that women play important roles in their communities and in the support activities on behalf of disaster victims. Such work has been key to local revitalization. Gender equality enables women to contribute the lessons gained from these important roles to public policy processes and disaster risk reduction strategies.

¹ 2013, *Disaster Risk Reduction A Japanese Women's Perspective on 3/11, JWNDRR, Tokyo*

The following proposals are based on the Network's accumulated experiences after three years of law reform activities and collaborative networking with women's organizations in the affected areas, as well as across the country. We hereby propose the following actions as a result of lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake. Our aim is to see these insights and lessons be incorporated into the HFA2 Agreement to be adopted at the Third Session of the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

HFA Priorities and Actions

HFA Priority Area 1: Governance/Institutions

Recommendation 1: Diversify Policy-making and Decision-making

Women should participate as scientific and technical advisors and as leaders in decision-making bodies at all levels of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and post-disaster recovery and reconstruction.

States should:

Action 1: ensure the participation of a minimum of 30% women and 30% men from diverse sectors, training and expertise, and of diverse ages and family formations, in all national, prefectural, and municipal policy-making and decision-making bodies dealing with Disaster Risk Reduction.

Action 2: encourage male leadership to actively reduce and remove barriers to women by providing mentorship and access to resources that strengthen women's leadership in all aspects of disaster risk reduction.

HFA Priority Area 2: Risk Assessment

Recommendation 2: Apply Evidence-based Risk Assessments

The use of indigenous and gendered science and local knowledge strengthens technology, training, education and effective public policy decisions around disaster risk reduction.

States should:

Action 1: carry out participatory community-based disaster risk assessments and follow-up research to formulate diversity and gender-equal policies.

Action 2: conduct monitoring and evaluation of policies integrating gender and diversity and subsequently hold (annual, if necessary) participatory practices of national law reform and national policy-making to apply lessons learned in gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness.

Action 3: ensure opportunities for diverse members of the population to actively contribute their expertise, experience and knowledge to the creation of a risk-wise culture that embraces multiple perspectives and knowledge bases.

Recommendation 3: Track Demographics and Integrate Diversity

Disaster Risk Reduction policies and early warning systems should reflect the full range of diversity in the population and take into account the needs, perspectives and realities of those with different backgrounds, including lifecycle/age, disabilities, sexual orientation, language barriers, class/economic status, immigrant status, and minority ethnicities. During disaster, violence, which is associated with power and control, may occur more frequently because of the loss of control. Such violence appears in the form of rapes, domestic violence,

unwanted pregnancies, and human trafficking.

States should:

Action 1: collect reliable and comparable demographic data that tracks gender, age, economic status, disability, mother tongue, among other relevant factors, based on individualized (not household) survey participation.

Action 2: ensure accessibility of information and services through all phases of disaster prevention, response, recovery and reconstruction to all members of society.

Action 3: strengthen support systems to prevent violence in society, specifically against women and marginalized populations.

Action 4: assure gender-specific health services in medical care and public welfare services, ensuring Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), through all stages of life.

Action 5: train and partner with local medical personnel, including midwives, doctors and support staffs to secure the provision of effective mental health services, including psychological care, for disaster victims..

Action 6: provide evacuation and shelter services supporting work at overcoming specific barriers such as violence against women and sexual minorities, language barriers (Braille, sign language, minority languages) and mobility/accessibility barriers (persons with disabilities).

HFA Priority Area 3: Education/Culture

Recommendation 4: Move Beyond Gender and Socio-cultural Stereotypes

Though women have been fulfilling crucial roles as leaders of relief activities in times of disaster and recovery/rehabilitation, they have generally been typecast as “vulnerable” by policy-makers and as passive "objects" of law, policy, and social services. Similarly, men’s roles and realities must also be evaluated beyond gender stereotypes (as heroes, rescue workers, etc) that obscure men’s vulnerabilities, including their need **of** psycho-social assistance in post-disaster contexts.

States should:

Action 1: recognize the resilience and strengths of women and girls, and support them as key "actors" and “leaders” in all phases of disaster risk reduction to ensure that their knowledge, expertise and capacities can contribute to fostering family and community resilience.

Action 2: recognize the vulnerability of men and boys, and acknowledge that gender equality requires commitments to services and programs that address the diverse realities and experiences of women and men in pre and post-disaster contexts.

Recommendation 5: Communicate Risk at all Levels

Governments, media, and civil society are partners in the communication of risk to all members of society. Build on capacities and specialized knowledge to respond to threats.

States should:

Action 1: Member states should ensure effective training and drills that accommodate special needs and marginalized communities, such that neighbors and communities will aid each other during disasters;

Action 2: Member states should make annual public investments in media outreach, public education, and civic

literacy on the importance of pursuing a democratic and inclusive culture of safety that is gender equal, and that publicly acknowledges the vulnerabilities and strengths found within the diverse communities contributing to the social, political and economic vibrancy of the country.

HFA Priority Area 4: Underlying Risk Factors

Recommendation 6: Promote Sustainable Development

Balanced ecosystems support disaster risk prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery capacity from phenomena such as flood, drought, hurricane, typhoon, earthquake and tsunami.

States should:

Action 1: Member states should integrate best practices for environment, climate change and gender-sensitive perspectives in disaster risk reduction policies to protect lives, economic livelihoods, and also foster long-term sustainable development for communities.

Action 2: Member states should pursue renewable energy to reduce dependence upon nuclear power and fossil fuels and consciously reduce the potential for human-induced disasters, such as nuclear accidents and oil spills.

Recommendation 7: Support Women's Economic Empowerment:

Women's economic empowerment both before and after disasters are a foundation of resilience and rapid economic recovery, and require provision of equal pay for work of equal value, vocational training without gender stereotypes, fair wages for care workers (childcare and eldercare), and fair wage distribution.

States should:

Action 1: Member states should conduct time-use surveys and research on unpaid care work, often assumed by women, to ensure that care workers receive recognition and economic benefits for their services.

Action 2: Member states should ensure equality in opportunities for financial access to economic and livelihood support, and ensure environmental viability and equal access to land and resources.

Action 3: Member states should investigate and identify measures to support the economic needs of marginalized and vulnerable members of society, including isolated and remote communities, people with disabilities, those with mobility barriers or severe illness, and those without effective fluency in the dominant language.

HFA Priority Area 5: Review/Strengthen Disaster Preparedness

Recommendation 8: Learn Lessons from HFA Implementation

The HFA states in its general considerations 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 practice, however, it has not yet actualized in many countries including Japan.

States should:

Action 1: Through HFA2, member states should commit to achieving key objectives and targets on the integration of gender equality and inclusive disaster risk reduction strategies and policies throughout all of the Priorities for Action.

(END)