

International Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction

Beijing, China
20-22 April, 2009

Context:

In recent years, different parts of the world have experienced an increased impact of disasters, which have taken lives, destroyed livelihoods and damaged socio-economic development. The trends in increasing disasters and disaster losses have clearly challenged the limited capacity of the national and international communities to respond to the needs of disaster-affected populations. Today, a large number of people are still feeling the pain and suffering from past disasters, such as the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008, Cyclone Nargis in 2008, Africa drought in 2006, Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004.

To prevent the loss of lives and protect socio-economic development, a growing number of international bodies, governments, academics, and civil society organizations are searching for ways to reduce people's vulnerabilities to disasters. At the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR), 168 governments from around the world adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), which aims to build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters by 2015.

In order to implement the HFA, the UN has increased its leadership in disaster risk reduction through enhanced coordination. 126 governments have designated official focal points for the HFA. Some 46 countries have established multi-stakeholder national platforms. The ISDR System and Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction have become the main vehicles to keep the momentum gained in disaster risk reduction going. Most governments have submitted their second national reports on progress made in their country in implementing the HFA. These reports will be used as an input to preparations for the second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in Geneva during the week of 15-19 June 2009.

Recently, gender perspectives have received more attention from various stakeholders due to consistent global advocacy and awareness-raising efforts that highlighted the importance of gender equality in disaster risk reduction. The relationship between disaster risk reduction and gender issues became apparent during the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. Since that time, gender perspectives have been incorporated into the two major UN publications related to the HFA: *Words into Action* and the *Global Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*.

However, progress in mainstreaming gender perspectives into disaster risk reduction remains inadequate. Gender considerations are still largely marginalized from the disaster risk reduction process. Based on information provided in national reports on disaster risk reduction, such marginalization of women is especially true at the national level. In daily realities, women are key victims as well as resilient forces to natural disasters. However, in disaster management and actions, women's voices are lost or inadequately addressed. In disaster reduction strategies and actions, women and gender equality issues are marginalized, leading to ineffective relief, rise in violations of women's rights including violence against women, and compromises in results of disaster reduction activities. Unfortunately, women are more likely to be regarded as a vulnerable group, rather than as leaders and contributors to building disaster resilience at national and local levels.

Both gender and disaster risk reduction are cross-cutting development issues. To achieve sustainable development, it is a win-win option for governments and other stakeholders to

mainstream gender perspectives into DRR and vice versa. This will not only contribute to making nations and communities more resilient to disasters, but also help address gender inequality in a comprehensive manner by promoting gender equality in the political, social, technical, developmental and humanitarian aspects of disaster risk reduction.

In addition to political commitment, the successful mainstreaming of gender perspectives into disaster risk reduction requires good understanding and capacity of both issues. However, the widespread lack of understanding, political accountability and capacity on gender and disaster risk reduction poses great challenges to the national governments and international community to mainstream gender perspectives in disaster risk reduction.

To address this issue, the All China Women's Federation, together with the United Nations, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat, will organize the International Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction in Beijing on 20-22 April 2009.

The International Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction

Time: April 20-22, 2009

Venue: Jianguo Garden Hotel, Beijing, China. (Please see attached hotel reservation form for details).

Organizers: All-China Women's Federation and the United Nations, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat

Co-host: The Ministry of Civil Affairs of China

Objectives:

- To review the progress made and challenges faced in mainstreaming gender in disaster risk reduction;
- To share knowledge, experiences and good practices in gender and disaster risk reduction;
- To discuss the major issues related to linking disaster risk reduction with poverty reduction, climate change adaptation, community development and policy making from gender perspectives;
- To recommend actions needed to mainstream gender into disaster risk reduction process by the end Hyogo Framework for Action in 2015.

Expected Results:

The Conference will expect the participants and participating organizations to:

- Achieve a good understanding of the opportunities and challenges of mainstreaming gender into disaster risk reduction;
- Increase their understanding and knowledge about win-win opportunities in gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction related to poverty reduction, climate change adaptation, community development and policy-making;
- Agree to a set of priorities for mainstreaming gender into disaster risk reduction;
- Demonstrate a clear commitment in implementing the results of the Conference.

Themes:

1. Promoting policy changes for gender sensitive disaster management and disaster risk reduction
2. Linking disaster risk reduction with poverty reduction from gender perspectives
3. Making disaster risk reduction a tool for climate change adaptation from gender perspective
4. Ensuring equal participation of men and women in building community resilience to disasters
5. Women and post-disaster relief and reconstruction: one year after Wenchuan earthquake

Preparatory Requirements

To ensure active participation and to achieve the expected results of the Conference, each participant is required to review the following documents before arriving:

1. Documents related to gender perspectives in DRR and disaster response from your own country or organization;
2. The brief summary on the Disaster Risk Reduction Process: A Gender Perspective;
3. The Good Practices on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction;
4. Gender Perspectives: Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into Climate Change adaptation;
5. The Manila Declaration on Global Action on Gender, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction.

All of the above documents will be forwarded to you in due course. This will allow for the efficient use of time during the conference and will contribute to stimulating lively and productive discussions.

Meeting Language: The meeting will be held in Chinese and English. The host organization, All China Women's Federation, will provide simultaneous translation services.

Registration: Kindly provide a copy of your photo through email or post on the submission of your registration form.

Tentative Program

19 April	Registration
20 April	
9:00 – 10:00	Opening Ceremony
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Remark by Chinese government/ parliament leader • Message from Under Secretary General of the UN (tbc) • Address by the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction • Address by Vice Minister of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of China • Huang Qingyi, Vice-President and First Member of the secretariat of the ACWF declares the opening
10:00 – 10:15	Tea and Coffee Break
10:15 – 12:15	Plenary Session 1: Promoting policy changes for gender sensitive disaster management and

	disaster risk reduction Presentations followed by Questions & Answers
12:15 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 16:00	Plenary Session 2: Linking disaster risk reduction with poverty reduction from gender perspectives Presentations followed by Questions & Answers
16:00 – 16:15	Tea and Coffee Break
16:15 – 18:00	Plenary Session 3: Making disaster risk reduction a tool for climate change adaptation from gender perspectives Presentations followed by Questions & Answers
19 : 30 – 21:00	Reception
21 April	
9:00-10:45	Plenary Session 4 Ensuring equal participation of men and women in building community resilience to disasters Presentations followed by Questions & Answers
10:45-11:00	Tea and coffee break
11:00-12:30	Plenary Session 5 Women and post-disaster relief and reconstruction: one year after Wenchuan Earthquake Presentations followed by Questions & Answers
12:30-14:00	Lunch Break
14:00-16:00	Group discussions on recommendations for mainstreaming gender perspectives in disaster risk reduction at national and local levels
16:00 – 16:15	Tea and coffee break
16:15 – 17:30	Group discussions (cont.)
22 April	
9 : 00 – 10 : 15	Plenary discussion and validation of the Beijing Declaration for Action in gender and disaster risk reduction
10 : 15 – 10 : 30	Tea break
10 : 30 – 12 : 00	Closing Ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing Remarks by Meng Xiaosi • Closing Remarks by the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction • Vote of thanks by participants
12 : 00 – 14 : 00	Lunch
14 : 00 – 17 : 00	Visit to Beijing Olympics Sites or Free
23 April	Departure