

Press release

25 May 2017 - UNISDR 2017/10

UN, RED CROSS/RED CRESCENT JOIN FORCES TO REDUCE DISASTER DEATHS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

CANCUN, Mexico, 25 May 2017 – A major initiative to prevent large numbers of women and girls dying in disasters and to ensure they are included in disaster risk management was launched today at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Cancun, Mexico, by the United Nations and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Mr. Yannick Glemarec, Assistant Secretary-General, UN Women, said: “We know that women and girls are more likely to die in disasters than men. This initiative is vital to redress the balance and ensure that as countries put national and local strategies for disaster risk reduction in place to meet the 2020 deadline, women are heard loud and clear and are present in the discussions as these strategies are developed by governments and local governments.”

The 2020 deadline for establishing national and local strategies for all UN member States is a key target in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the global plan for reducing mortality and disaster losses, adopted at a UN World Conference two years ago in Sendai, Japan.

Mr. Robert Glasser, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, said: “UN Women, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction recognize that gender inequality is a major obstacle to reducing loss of life in disaster situations as it shapes the extent to which men, women, boys and girls are vulnerable to, and affected by disasters.”

The three organizations are joining forces under the “Global Programme in Support of a Gender Responsive Sendai Framework Implementation: Addressing the Gender Inequality of Risk and Promoting Community Resilience to Natural Hazards in a Changing Climate ” or GIR for brevity.

About UNISDR: UNISDR is the UN office dedicated to disaster risk reduction. It is led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and supports implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 which seeks “the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses, in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.”

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Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, IFRC Under-Secretary-General for Partnerships, said: “The goal of the global programme is to reduce loss of lives and livelihoods, and to enhance the resilience of communities to natural hazards by addressing the gender inequalities that are exploited and worsened by disasters.

“The Red Cross and Red Crescent is committed to tackling gender inequality and to promoting the leadership of women and girls in disaster management and disaster risk reduction.”

The global programme will specifically contribute to the following outcomes: the gender dimension of risk is understood and assessed; Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policy and risk governance is gender responsive; women’s capacity to prevent, prepare for and recover from natural hazards in a changing climate is strengthened; and women’s participation and leadership in disaster risk reduction and resilience building is strengthened. The implementation of GIR will be driven at the country level.

Together, UN Women, IFRC and UNISDR are well positioned to bring about transformative change due to their experiences, complementary mandates and vast networks. The collaboration will leverage IFRC’s strong global and local networks and outreach, UNISDR’s substantial leadership and convening power on DRR and UN WOMEN’s global body of knowledge and expertise on gender equality and women’s empowerment and its strong network with women and civil society organizations through its field presence.

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