

## **Voice of Men and Women on Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Sensitive**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen:

I speak before you on behalf of women and men who attended the Roundtable Discussion on Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive.

As the first official session of the Global Platform on gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction, the dialogue was well attended and insightful of the challenges at hand. About 180 participants from various disciplines attended, including 50 men.

With high-level panelists and active audiences, the forum enabled us to discuss the importance of gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction as well as the challenges and opportunities to implement it at all levels.

The forum emphasized the viewpoint that women are leaders and effective catalysts of change and solutions and not merely referred to as among the vulnerable groups or passive victims of disasters.

In integrating the gender perspective into disaster risk reduction is an integral component and an important prerequisite of sustainable development. With it, we build the resilience of countries and communities to disasters. Yet the strategy remains a challenge. And while it is a work-in-progress, the pace by which we work to attain it is reportedly slow at all levels.

We cannot allow the situation to remain so. We must therefore augment, accelerate, and sustain our efforts in raising awareness and in building the capacity of governments and communities for mainstreaming gender and disaster risk reduction into development.

To deliver desired results on the ground, we must all work together double time.

Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and gender is a collective challenge that calls for building alliances and multi-partnerships, and for transcending political affiliations. It should therefore remain as a major Global Platform agenda.

Taking a gender perspective in DRR has less to do with political correctness and more to do with effective development, preventing and mitigating the effects of disasters on the most vulnerable and the equitable sharing of benefits.

Moreover, addressing gender imbalance and differentiation needs to consider access to information, knowledge and decision-making tools as well as to strategies for adapting to

climate change, among others.

Finally, government accountability in mainstreaming gender perspective should also be addressed with the active role of parliamentarians and civil societies, requesting governments to report HFA progress in accordance with UNISDR guidelines and indicators.