

**STATEMENT BY THE WOMEN'S MAJOR GROUP <sup>1</sup>**  
**World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR)**  
**Sendai, Japan, March 15, 2015**

Thank you, Chair.

Esteemed Colleagues, I am Hiroko Hara from the Japan Women's Network for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Women's Major Group is committed to achieving women's human rights and gender equality as well as ensuring that the post-2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is centered on all people, in all their diversity -- gender, sex, age, race, ethnicity, geography, income, and ability. To address underlying risk factors and overcome structural inequalities, we must use a human rights-based approach in every phase of disaster risk reduction, development, and enhancing resiliency.

The Hyogo Framework for Action, which was adopted in 2005, mentioned the importance of including gender perspectives in DRR, but this remains largely unimplemented. We call on Member States to demonstrate political will and commitment to addressing this gap in the post-2015 DRR Framework. Women and communities must not wait another 15 years for action.

The post-2015 framework for Disaster Risk reduction must ensure implementation of policies that fully empower women to take leadership roles and participate in decision-making bodies. In order to achieve this, women's capacities in DRR must be further enhanced through training at every level of government and community. Implementing multi-level training programs will strengthen the health, safety and security as well as the resilience of the entire community.

To guide the successful implementation of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, the Women's Major Group recommends the following actions within each of the four post-2015 framework priority areas.

**Priority 1 is about Understanding disaster risk:**

**We must deconstruct differential risk and ensure data disaggregation and analysis.**

Vulnerability is not a static state. It is a product of pre-existing dynamics, social norms, and policies and marginalization. Such underlying causes of vulnerability create differential risk in context-specific ways, for women and men of all ages, girls and boys. Risk strategies, differentiated according to age, lifecycle, feminization of poverty, and other factors are

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<sup>1</sup> This is the written version of the Women's Major Group (WGM) Statement for the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR). The version delivered in plenary was shortened and is available in text and video at <http://www.wcdrr.org/conference/programme/documentation>

critical. We must move beyond gendered sociocultural stereotypes that construct women as victims, and men as heroes, and respond to the unique capacities and psychosocial needs of both women and men.

Current targets are generalised and lack data disaggregation and a social perspective. DRR requires development of robust indicators that assist governments and stakeholders in effective monitoring, accountability and achievement of resilience targets.

We urge Member States to:

- Understand and act to **protect women's rights** before, during and after an event, including the right of all women and girls to live free from violence and to secure sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Comprehensively understand disaster risk and conduct **gender analysis**, which requires the **ethical, participatory collection and use of gender-specific, sex/age/disability-disaggregated data**.
- Establish baselines using gender disaggregated data
- Periodically assess disaster risks, including vulnerability and underlying risk drivers such as gender inequality, and implement gender-responsive risk reduction measures accordingly.

**Priority 2 is about strengthening governance to manage disaster risk:**

**Gender equality and women's human rights are fundamental for Disaster Risk reduction efforts**, as echoed in, among others, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

We urge governments (and all stakeholders) to:

- Ensure **diverse and active participation in DRR decision-making, programming implementation, evaluation, monitoring, and financing** processes.
- **Establish mechanisms** for providing training, financial support and social services that ensure women are actively engaged in DRR processes.
- Strengthen **gender-inclusive and diverse civil society networking opportunities** to improve multi-stakeholder participation, coordination, and information exchange

Many partnerships among women's groups and local governments are already underway in several countries of the Global South. These partnerships are instrumental in formally recognizing the public roles of women as data gatherers and local risk analysts, information disseminators, and monitors of public programs. In several countries organized groups of women from urban poor communities have also collaborated with local governments to implement local authorities' commitments to the Making Cities Resilient Campaign.

We call for Member States to:

- ***Incentivize partnerships between local governments and women's groups*** focused on community resilience.

**Priority 3 is about Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience:**

***Women and girls' perspectives, skills and knowledge are critical*** in disaster risk management and enhancing the development of risk reduction strategies. They must be fostered, valued and integrated into the DRR process in all phases, by means of, for example, sustainable women's leadership and training initiatives that have multi-generational effects on DRR and facilitate community resilience.

***We urge governments to:***

- ***Allocate resources*** to gender-responsive expertise, research, education, and training at all levels.
- ***Institutionalize gender-responsive training and capacity-building at all levels.***
- Ensure that multi-level leadership and training programs ***target not only vulnerable peoples, but also power-holders.***
- ***Address socioeconomic vulnerabilities before disasters occur*** so that women and diverse groups will be able to fulfill leadership roles and strengthen resilience – in coherence with the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and the SDGs.

**Priority 4 is about enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and Building Back Better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, which requires inclusive DRR to ensure resilience.**

We urge governments and stakeholders to:

- Ensure ***accessibility of information and services*** through all phases of disaster prevention, response, recovery and reconstruction to all members of society.
- ***Recognize unpaid and domestic care work contributions by women to resilience, including those in paid, unpaid, formal, and informal labor;*** prevent policies from creating or exacerbating gendered divisions and burdens of labor; and ensure caretaking and other activities that build household, local, and community resilience are supported
- ***Strengthen support systems to prevent violence*** in society, specifically against women and marginalized populations.
- ***Assure gender-specific health services*** in medical care and public welfare services, ensuring Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), through all stages of life.
- Ensure ***accountability, including of any private sector investments and funding,*** in DRR.
- Provide ***evacuation and shelter services that ensures safety and well-being of each evacuee,*** such as protection from violence against women and sexual minorities; provision of information in multiple languages (Braille, sign language, minority

languages); and mobility/accessibility for persons with disabilities.

We call on Member States to demonstrate political will and commitment to addressing these gaps and issues in the post-2015 DRR Framework. Women and communities must not wait another 15 years for action.

For the last decade, we - women, women's groups and those working with women and girls - have been committed to including gender and diversity in DRR practices and building resilience. We commit to using gendered data for improving risk analyses, training leaders at all levels, and improving DRR design and planning with diverse participation. We will continue with our work and we stand ready to work together with all of you.

On behalf of the Women's Major Group and the diverse stakeholder groups we represent, we offer our sincerest thanks.