

1st PrepCom for the Third World
Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (3WCDDRR)
July 14-15, 2014
Geneva, Switzerland
Women's Major Group Plenary Statement, July 15, 2014

Thank you co-chairs.

My name is Ms. Akiko Domoto from the Japanese Women's Network for Disaster Risk Reduction, and I'm speaking on behalf of the Women's Major Group. Today, I will focus on 5 points (an elaborated statement is available online).

First, the WMG confirms that the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction should embody a vision of resilience, diversity, human rights, and sustainability.

Building on the vision of the Hyogo Framework for Action to integrate a gender perspective, it is essential that women are involved as leaders in decision-making, budgeting, and planning processes about disaster risk reduction at all levels.

Stakeholder outcomes in the Asia Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Bangkok, call for participation of a minimum of 30% women and 30% men from diverse sectors, training and expertise, and of diverse ages and family formations, at all levels of DRR.

Second, the Framework must link to the larger Sustainable Development agenda. To achieve gender equality and sustainable development, gender must be integrated throughout the SDGs, and MDGs. The Women's Major Group for Sustainable Development, along with many others, are aiming to transform structures, institutions, and societies to achieve justice, equality and the realization of human rights for all, which must also happen through HFA2.

Third, strategies and actions for DRR must recognize the resilience and strength of women and girls, and support them as key "actors" and "leaders" in all phases of disaster risk reduction to ensure that their skills, knowledge, and capacities contribute to DRR. Women's organizations and associations should be integrated into the formal risk management structure.

We provide some examples that guide action in specific areas:

In terms of *Urban risk reduction* (i), Japan's experience with the 2011 Great Earthquake and Tsunami demonstrated that the evacuation centers were managed only by men, who excluded women from decision-making and did not understand women's needs in emergencies. At one large evacuation center – with 13-hundred people – we found they weren't even allowed to put up partitions to have a bit of privacy. There was nowhere to change clothes, and no place for mothers to breastfeed their babies. Women told me, “We have no time or space for ourselves. We're struggling to endure these conditions.” I asked the man in charge...why no partitions were allowed...and he responded – that he wanted to watch what everyone was doing. Even worse, women told us they feared being sexually molested – which did happen in several places. This is what happens when women's needs are not considered – when gender is not recognized as a fundamental principle to DRR. Once the Gender Equality Centers recognized the challenges in the shelters, they coordinated laundry services and supplies that met women's specific health needs.

The fourth point is on targets and indicators for monitoring and accountability, which must address socioeconomic and diverse dimensions of risk. National governments need to collect and report on sex-, gender-, and age-disaggregated data. This data is critical throughout the disaster risk cycle.

The fifth point is on reviewing implementation of the post-2015 HFA2, which must be undertaken with concerted effort by all stakeholders. This could incorporate a peer review mechanism. Civil society from Major Groups and other Stakeholders including women, youth, indigenous peoples, and marginalized communities- should be involved in any panel of experts or working group.

In conclusion, the proposed DRR framework should invest in gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment mechanisms for sustainable and resilient societies. Looking at DRR holistically will ensure that HFA2 is more than a list of measurable targets and instead has the potential to transform. We stand ready to support a transformational process. Thank you.