



**11TH G20
PARLIAMENTARY
SPEAKERS' SUMMIT**



**GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN
DISASTER RESILIENCE AND
RESPONSE EFFORTS**

18 July 2025

Jeanie Le Roux; Crystal Levendale and Nondumiso Dumakude, Parliamentary Research Unit, Parliament of South Africa

.....

Harnessing Parliamentary Diplomacy for the Realization of Global Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability

ACRONYMS

DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
UN	United Nations
SDG's	Sustainable Development Goals
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
UNDRR	United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction
GBV	Gender-based violence

Table of contents

Acronyms	2
Abstract.....	4
Key Considerations	4
1. Background	5
2. Gendered Vulnerabilities in Disasters	5
2.1 Differentiated Needs and Impacts	5
2.2 Gender-Based Violence.....	7
3. Cultural Sensitivity in Gendered Disaster Response Approaches	8
3.1 Local Institutions as Entry Points	8
3.2 Addressing Patriarchal Norms and Social Taboos	9
3.3 Risk of Tokenism and Cultural Resistance	9
4. Leadership and Meaningful Participation geared towards Action: The role of Parliaments in Gender Mainstreaming.....	10
4.1 Improving the Representation of Women	11
4.2 Embed Cultural Sensitivity with Transformative Intent	13
4.3 Institutionalise Gender Mainstreaming in Disaster Planning.....	13
4.4 Address Economic and Health Inequalities in Recovery	14
4.5 Build Inclusive Knowledge Systems and Awareness	14
4.6 Enhance Accountability Through Monitoring and Funding	14
4.7.1 Gender-responsive early warning systems	15
4.7.2 Safe and equitable access to relief and emergency services.....	16
4.7.3 Gender-responsive budgeting and resource allocation	16
4.7.4 Legal and policy instruments	16
4.7.5 Data and accountability.....	16
5. Conclusion	17
Bibliography.....	17

ABSTRACT

This background paper explores the critical importance of gender mainstreaming in disaster resilience and response efforts, highlighting the disproportionate impact of climate change and disasters on women and marginalised groups. Drawing on UN frameworks such as the Sendai Framework and the 2024 Sendai Gender Action Plan, it examines the differentiated needs of women in disasters—especially in relation to gender-based violence, cultural norms, access to resources, and participation in decision-making. The paper underscores the role of parliaments in embedding gender considerations across legislation, budgeting, oversight, and monitoring, with a particular focus on the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data. Through culturally sensitive, inclusive, and accountable approaches, parliamentarians can drive the development of gender-responsive early warning systems, equitable access to services, and effective oversight mechanisms that ensure no one is left behind in disaster risk reduction efforts.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- About 80% of people displaced by natural disasters are women.
 - Women and girls with disabilities are at particular risk of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation during, and following, disasters.
 - Disaster responses that purport to include women’s voices without adequate resources or institutional backing often fail to deliver real impact, often referred to as ‘tokenism’.
 - While women’s participation is enshrined in international and gender equality frameworks, their representation in climate change negotiations has stagnated, and continues to decline.
 - Country adaptation plans should include gender action plans, which recognise the interrelationships between GBV and disaster.
-

1. BACKGROUND

Along with gender inequality, climate and environmental crises constitute significant sustainable development challenges faced globally.¹ Disasters intensify existing inequalities and structural vulnerabilities in society, with gender continuing to be a major source of inequality in disaster resilience, disproportionately impacting women and marginalised groups across age, class, and region.

Some disaster policies still fail to systematically integrate gender-responsive measures, particularly in contexts where cultural biases, patriarchal systems, and institutional neglect deepen exclusion.

Furthermore, the interplay between cultural contexts and gender dynamics complicates disaster interventions. Strategies that ignore local cultural norms often fail to resonate with or protect the most at-risk groups. Equally, when disaster responses engage local power structures and institutions, they foster greater acceptability, ownership, and sustainability.²

As part of the overall focus on gender mainstreaming in disaster resilience and response programmes, the purpose of this background brief is to explore the differentiated needs and impacts of disasters on women, as the basis for understanding the need and extent of gender mainstreaming. This will include a focus on topics such as gender-based violence (GBV), cultural sensitivity in gendered disaster response approaches, access to resources, leadership and meaningful participation. A further key dimension is the role of parliaments and parliamentarians in gender mainstreaming of disaster resilience and response programmes. The paper also reviews their roles in ongoing monitoring and evaluation of policy and legislation, as well as inputs, budgets and outcomes in relation to disaster resilience and response programmes.

2. GENDERED VULNERABILITIES IN DISASTERS

2.1 Differentiated Needs and Impacts

The World Bank estimates that more than 143 million people could be displaced by 2050 due to the impacts of climate change. Approximately 80% of people displaced by natural disasters are women. Further, climate change ignites conflict over natural resources, causing further displacement of women.³ About 21.5 million people are displaced each year because of climate-related issues, and children and women are 14 times more likely than men to die or be injured due to a natural disaster.

¹ UNDRR (2022).

² Tandlich, R., Chirenda, T. G., & Srinivas, C. S. (2013). Preliminary assessment of the gender aspects of disaster vulnerability and loss of human life in South Africa.

³³ Levendale & Ngqwala (2023).

Climate disasters have been shown to increase GBV, including sexual harassment and violence, domestic violence, child marriage, sexual exploitation of children, and human trafficking. Taking into consideration the above statistics, it is evident that women, as a key population affected by natural disasters, must be part of the response to the disaster. United Nations (UN) Women asserts that “while women and girls experience disproportionate impacts from climate change at the global level, the effects are not uniform. Looking at climate change through the lens of intersectional feminism, the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other, it is clear that climate change risks are acute for indigenous and Afro-descendent women and girls, older women, LGBTIQ+ people, women and girls with disabilities, migrant women, and those living in rural, remote, conflict and disaster-prone areas.”⁴

The effects of climate change on women and girls are not uniform, representing acute risks to particular groups or persons.

People further have different adaptation needs, depending on where they live, how they sustain their livelihoods, and the roles they play in their families and communities. Without taking cognisance of gendered dynamics, there is a risk that the people with the greatest need for adaptation will be left out.⁵

It is therefore apparent that there cannot be a blanket or “one size fits all” approach to resolving issues relating to the impact of climate change on women.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) highlights that:⁶

- Disasters are not experienced uniformly by everyone in society. Men and women, boys and girls, and people of diverse gender identities are affected differently by disasters, even if they live in the same household
- The vulnerability and exposure to disaster risk that disproportionately impacts women and girls is economically, socially and culturally constructed and can be reduced.
- Effective disaster risk governance must consider the ways in which gender dynamics influence disaster impacts.
- When women’s capacities, knowledge and skills are utilised in disaster risk reduction efforts, we will all benefit.

⁴ Levendale & Ngqwala (2023).

⁵ UN Women (2023a).

⁶ United Nations Office on Disaster Risk Reduction (2022).

2.2 Gender-Based Violence

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in general recommendation No.37⁷ indicates the following:⁸

- Women and girls face a heightened risk of GBV during and following disasters.
- In the absence of social protection schemes and in situations where there is food insecurity combined with impunity for GBV, women and girls are often exposed to sexual violence and exploitation as they attempt to gain access to food and other basic needs for family members and themselves.
- In camps and temporary settlements, the lack of physical security, as well as the lack of safe and accessible infrastructure and services, including drinking water and sanitation, also result in increased levels of GBV against women and girls.
- Women and girls with disabilities are at particular risk of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation during and following disasters, owing to discrimination based on physical limitations, barriers to communication, and the inaccessibility of basic services and facilities.
- Domestic violence, early and/ or forced marriage, trafficking in persons and forced prostitution are also more likely to occur during and following disasters.

Loss of key infrastructure and interruptions to law enforcement exacerbate the vulnerability of women and girls.

While resources for survivors of GBV should be a national priority regardless of the occurrence of a disaster or conflict situation, the need for adequate resources may be intensified during these events. The loss of key infrastructure such as dwellings, schools, health, and other social services/ protection, alongside the loss of financial security, may have additional consequences for women and girls. When security and services on multiple levels are lacking, women and girls may be more prone to GBV, sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancy, early marriage and other forms of abuse. In addition, interruptions to law enforcement and reporting mechanisms exacerbates vulnerability.

As indicated, provision should be made in national/ domestic legislation and budgets as a standard government priority but should also be made in both conflict and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) planning and policy. Country adaptation plans should include gender action plans, which recognise the interrelationships between GBV and disaster insofar as increased vulnerabilities are concerned.

Parliaments must insist on gender and vulnerability assessments in conflict and DRR planning and policy and advocate for inclusive policies and budget allocations. In undertaking their

⁷ General recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change.

⁸ United Nations (2018).

oversight activities parliamentary committees, as well as individual Members must consider among others, whether plans and budgets include the provision of safe evacuation spaces for women and other vulnerable groups, as well as access to support services for survivors of GBV. Mechanisms to ensure effective law enforcement and access to healthcare services are essential.

3. CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN GENDERED DISASTER RESPONSE APPROACHES

Cultural sensitivity is vital in ensuring that disaster responses are both effective and equitable. However, gender equality and cultural norms can often appear in tension, particularly in patriarchal societies or conflict-affected settings. UN Women notes that “women’s leadership results in increased sustainability and peace, yet across all sectors and levels, women are underrepresented in advancing disaster resilience and climate justice.”⁹

This can be attributed to factors such as cultural norms which do not allow or encourage women’s participation, the challenge of work-life balance, and the burden of unpaid care work which restrict women’s time and availability, or decision-making platforms that are male-dominated and fail to make women feel comfortable or confident to participate.

Women are underrepresented in advancing disaster resilience and climate justice.

3.1 Local Institutions as Entry Points

Studies from Nepal, Pakistan, and vulnerable communities demonstrate that interventions grounded in local institutions and traditions are likely to succeed.¹⁰ In Nepal, Women’s Empowerment Centres adapted to multi-ethnic and caste-sensitive contexts by working through village cooperatives and literacy programmes rooted in local dialects. This led to increased participation by women in disaster planning and a reduction in gender-based violence.¹⁰ Gender continues to be a major and preventable source of inequality in disaster resilience, disproportionately impacting women and marginalised groups across age, class, and region. Despite this, disaster policies still fail to systematically integrate gender-responsive measures, particularly in contexts where cultural biases, patriarchal systems, and institutional neglect deepen exclusion.

In Pakistan for example, community-based disaster recovery programmes that worked with religious and tribal leaders saw improved acceptance of women’s roles in public rebuilding efforts.¹¹ These examples show that legitimacy through cultural institutions enhances both short-term protection and long-term empowerment.

⁹ UN Women (2024).

¹⁰ Dhungel, R., & Ojha, R. N. (2012). Women's empowerment for disaster risk reduction and emergency response in Nepal.

¹¹ Richter, R., & Flowers, T. (2008). Gendered dimensions of disaster care: critical distinctions in female psychosocial needs, triage, pain assessment, and care. *American Journal of Disaster Medicine*.

3.2 Addressing Patriarchal Norms and Social Taboos

Interventions should also challenge gender-discriminatory customs. In South Africa, particularly in rural areas and informal settlements, women’s exclusion from decision-making often stems from deep-seated beliefs about gender roles.¹² Programmes that merely accommodate such customs may unintentionally reinforce inequality.

Balancing cultural respect with gender advocacy requires more than benevolence, it demands structured, dialogue-based approaches that centre local voices. Initiatives like the Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT), cited in Nepal’s (2020) study on disaster leadership in Nepal. This study demonstrate how participatory methods can empower women to voice their needs on their own terms. By combining Freirean critical consciousness with community-led literacy programs, REFLECT creates safe spaces for women to analyse power structures, redefine their roles in preparedness, and advocate for change without alienating traditional leaders.

Nepal’s research underscores that such approaches succeed when they:

- Leverage existing social networks (e.g., mothers’ groups, faith-based circles) to build trust.
- Frame gender inclusion as collective resilience, showing how women’s leadership benefits entire communities during disasters.
- Avoid ‘top-down’ messaging, instead using local narratives (e.g., storytelling, role-playing) to challenge norms.

In Nepal, REFLECT participants shifted from being excluded from disaster planning to leading village-level early-warning systems. This proved that cultural legitimacy and feminist agency can coexist. For policymakers, this signals a critical lesson: effective gender-sensitive disaster response is not about imposing equity but co-creating it through humility and patience.¹³

3.3 Risk of Tokenism and Cultural Resistance

Without a nuanced approach, gender-sensitive programmes may become tokenistic. For example, disaster responses that appoint “women’s committees” without resources or institutional backing often fail to deliver real impact.¹⁴ Likewise, interventions not tailored to intersecting cultural identities such as ethnicity, religion, or language may exclude key subgroups, such as migrant women or girls from conservative communities.¹⁵ This the shows,

¹² Luna, K., & Hilhorst, D. (2022). Gendered experience of disaster: Women's account of evacuation, relief and recovery in Nepal. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*.

¹³ Nepal, U. (2020). *A Study on Potential Leadership Approaches to Address Gender-Based Constraints in Effective Preparedness for Disasters in Nepal*.

¹⁴ Drolet, J., Dominelli, L., Alston, M., Ersing, R. L., & Mathbor, G. (2015). *Women rebuilding lives post-disaster: innovative community practices for building resilience and promoting sustainable development*.

¹⁵ Lwamba, E., Shisler, S., Riddlehoover, W., Kupfer, M., Tshabalala, N., et al. (2021). Strengthening women's empowerment and gender equality in fragile contexts towards peaceful and inclusive societies: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*.

that success lies not in avoiding culture, but in navigating it expertly, identifying opportunities for local transformation while respecting traditions.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION GEARED TOWARDS ACTION: THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The UN emphasises that every citizen has a role to play in reducing disaster risk, but governments are best positioned to create an enabling environment for gender equality in disaster risk reduction.¹⁶

*It is important, whether integrated or standalone, that risk, capacity, and vulnerability assessments are gender-responsive and inclusive. Otherwise, for example climate change adaptation can be maladapted to specific sections of a community, especially people who are already disadvantaged, including women...if these assessments are not based on gender analysis, there is a risk that they will miss gendered impacts of harmful practices or lack identification of measures needed to address gendered climate-related risks. **Gender analysis is therefore an important technique in risk assessments, needs assessments, and gender-responsive decision-making processes.** It takes into account structural inequalities and the specific and differing needs and perspectives of women and girls, men and boys, and people of diverse genders in a specific context. Understanding the root causes of vulnerability, including gender inequality, socio-economic disparity, access and control over resources, is vital for inclusive and equitable processes and outcomes and therefore essential for comprehensive gender-responsive and inclusive risk assessments.*¹⁷

The **Sendai Gender Action Plan**, launched in 2024, calls for accelerated achievement of the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** by increasing resource allocations, activities and impacts of gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and substantially decreasing gender-related disaster risk by 2030. One of its key objectives is the mainstreaming of gender across laws, policies, strategies and institutions for disaster risk reduction, informed by relevant international treaties and agreements.

Parliaments are institutions constitutionally mandated with the triple role of representation, lawmaking and oversight including passing and reviewing government budgets/ expenditure. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Parliaments must “step beyond the traditional executive prerogative in international affairs, and subject governments to the same degree of oversight as in domestic policy arena”.¹⁸

¹⁶ UN, 2009, Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender-Sensitive Policy and Practical Guidelines

¹⁷ United Nations Women (n.d).

¹⁸ IPU (2006).

To effectively achieve this, there are certain conditions that must be met, including the following¹⁹:

- A clear legal basis for a parliamentary involvement.
- Be sufficiently informed and in advance of government policies and negotiating positions together with accurate information about the policies and their background.
- Have the necessary organisation and resources to address the issues, including sufficient expertise among the individual parliamentarians involved through their work in specialised committees.
- Be afforded an opportunity to put questions to ministers and negotiators and thus be able to express its political (though not necessarily legally binding) views to the government.
- Be included, as a matter of course, in governmental delegations to international fora.²⁰

In their position as important role players in regional and international policy matters, parliaments are not necessarily laying claim to a negotiating mandate, given that this remains the task of the executive. However, parliaments must be able to scrutinise the negotiations and be kept fully informed as they unfold and be afforded an opportunity to express their views on the matter to the executive. It is important for the envisaged regional role of parliament to be complemented by the new concepts such as shared governance or the governance continuum linking state-centred and societal-centred governance.²¹

It is thus imperative to call for enhanced cooperation between ministries and departments responsible for disaster risk reduction, climate change, poverty reduction and gender issues.

4.1 Improving the Representation of Women

Women are often at the coalface of disaster risk prevention and post-disaster recovery operations, undertaking the activities to address the challenges facing their families and communities. However, women's perspectives are often excluded in disaster management planning and assessment.

¹⁹ Le Roux & Madlala (2017).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.



When meaningfully engaged, women can contribute significantly to co-creating resilience and adaptation strategies and solutions, given their understanding of the environment and their role as custodians of ancestral and traditional knowledge. Yet, women’s needs and interests are not sufficiently considered and women’s leadership not promoted in key decisions around mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction.²²

A review of women’s participation at the most recent COP on Climate Change summits highlights that “only 8 out of the 78 world leaders participating in COP29 are women: while the Conference of Parties (COP) strives to be an inclusive summit, the negotiation table remains far from diverse. Delegations at the UN’s Framework Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC) are consistently increasing in numbers, but women’s representation has stagnated and even decreased. At COP28 in 2023, women constituted 15 out of the 133 world leaders and only 34% of national delegates, with a mere 2% of delegations attained a gender balance in their ranks. These numbers have remained relatively unchanged over the past decade, highlighting ongoing challenges in achieving gender parity in climate negotiations.”²³

While women’s participation in decision-making finds itself enshrined in various international and regional human rights and gender equality frameworks and agreements, implementation of these commitments needs to be monitored for compliance as well as domesticated by State Parties to the agreements. To this end parliaments have a valuable role to play to ensure women’s representation.

While delegations to climate change negotiations consistently increase in number, women’s representation has stagnated or even decreased.

Parliaments should create spaces where women’s voices and rights are duly recognised and exercised and promote women’s equal participation and voice to share experiences and solutions across groups and sectors, including trans-nationally.

²² FAO Regional Office for Africa Gender and Climate Change (2021)

²³ Care Climate Justice Centre (2024).

UN Women indicates that ideally 50-50% equal quotas for representation of women and men should be made mandatory, however at least 30% should be applied as a starting point. Women should be represented in the following structures in relation to disaster risk reduction²⁴:

DRR Platforms	Disaster Management Committee /teams	Other senior and leadership positions
	National Disaster Management Committee/Team	Women parliamentarians
African Regional Platform for DRR	Provincial Disaster Management Committee/Team	National focal point for DRR
National platforms for DRR	District Disaster or Development Management Committee/Team	Gender focal points within line ministries and agencies
Local platforms for DRR	Village/Community Disaster or Development Management Committee/Team	Leadership of Women Rights Organisations and women's groups
	Women's leadership and decision making for DRR and resilience with households	Within the UN and other international and national NGOs working on DRR

Source: UN Women (2023^b)

Parliaments must endeavour to increase the number of women in parliament and in decision-making positions and ensure that women are adequately represented in country delegation for disaster risk reduction engagements. Public representatives at provincial and local government levels must also implement measures to ensure that women are included in leadership and decision-making positions at these levels.

4.2 Embed Cultural Sensitivity with Transformative Intent

- Design interventions that are respectful of local norms but aim to shift discriminatory gender roles.
- Use participatory tools such as REFLECT and community-led disaster literacy programmes that empower women within their cultural settings.
- Partner with local leaders, traditional authorities, and faith-based organisations to build trust and legitimacy.

4.3 Institutionalise Gender Mainstreaming in Disaster Planning

- Parliaments must call on the executive, to undertake a national disaster risk management assessment, as well as develop inclusive national disaster risk and reduction plans.

²⁴ UN Women (2023b).

- This must include gender-specific data and statistics, and for relevant departments and entities to carry out gender-sensitive vulnerability, risk and capacity assessments and develop gender-sensitive indicators to monitor and measure progress.
- This includes a requirement for gender impact assessments as part of all municipal disaster risk management plans.
- Ensure gender-disaggregated data collection on disaster losses, access to services, and recovery outcomes.
- Strengthen coordination between the line departments responsible for socially vulnerable groups and the national disaster management structure.
- Parliamentarians, as elected representatives are also able to collect data on specific vulnerabilities from their constituencies and share these with relevant local, provincial and national structures. This facilitates inclusion and participation by those directly affected by disaster.

4.4 Address Economic and Health Inequalities in Recovery

- Prioritise support for informal workers, women-headed households, and unpaid caregivers in post-disaster assistance.
- Invest in mobile reproductive health clinics, psychosocial support, and access to safe shelters tailored for women and girls.
- Protect displaced men and boys from mental health risks through community-based peer support programmes.

4.5 Build Inclusive Knowledge Systems and Awareness

- Translate disaster preparedness materials into local languages and adapt them for diverse literacy levels.
- Promote gender-sensitive curricula in schools and training institutions, linking disaster response with SDG 5 (achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls).
- Document and elevate women's experiences and innovations in disaster resilience to inform future programming.
- Parliaments need to acknowledge that women are inherently vulnerable, owing to the complex power relations and socio-economic characteristics that result in crises affecting them differently to their male counterparts. Therefore, Parliaments should place women and gender equality at the core of institutional structures or arrangements and policy development, as well as oversight, to ensure that government operations, governance and budgeting is reflective of them.

4.6 Enhance Accountability Through Monitoring and Funding

- Allocate earmarked budgets for gender-responsive disaster interventions in municipal and provincial plans
- Establish monitoring systems to track gender outcomes across short- and long-term phases of disaster recovery.

4.7 Enhanced access to Resources and Improved Monitoring and Evaluation

Enhanced access to resources and improved monitoring and evaluation efforts are interrelated. Parliamentary committees are required to engage with government and other stakeholders to ensure that sufficient resources and budgets are allocated to disaster resilience and response programmes and that these are allocated and structured in such a way that they respond to the unique requirements of women and girls. During this process, the availability of sex disaggregated data is essential to ensure that needs are adequately responded to and that budgets and programmes were developed with the correct population groups in mind.

At the same time, when parliamentary committees conduct oversight, or otherwise track the impact of these programmes and policies, presenting the findings through sex-disaggregated data is required to verify the efficacy of the programmes and policies in terms of gender targets.

These two processes feed into one another where the findings and outcomes of monitoring and evaluation inform the required adjustments and considerations of the development of programmes and policies. Therefore, the quality and availability of sex-disaggregated data is a cornerstone of sufficient planning and capacitating parliamentary committees to fulfil their mandate.

Notwithstanding the content of the previous sections, the following five areas require specific attention from parliamentarians when considering resource allocations and categories and specifications for monitoring and evaluation.

4.7.1 Gender-responsive early warning systems²⁵

- **Localised, inclusive dissemination:** Ensuring the use of multiple communication channels and relevant languages (SMS, radio, community leaders, pictograms) tailored to reach women, including those with low literacy or limited mobility.
- **Gendered risk communication:** Ensuring that content includes specific advice for pregnant women, caregivers, GBV survivors, and others with differentiated needs.
- **Community-based monitoring:** The engaging of women's groups in validating risk maps and local hazard data to improve the relevance and uptake of disaster monitoring measures.

Sex disaggregated data is key for ensuring needs are adequately funded and to monitor and evaluate disaster response efforts.

²⁵ UNDRR (2023).

4.7.2 Safe and equitable access to relief and emergency services²⁶

- **Sex-segregated shelters and sanitation:** The provision of safe, secure, and private spaces for women and girls in evacuation shelters, including menstrual hygiene materials and maternal care facilities to ensure their safety.
- **GBV risk mitigation:** The deployment of trained personnel (including women) to screen for GBV risks in disaster zones and link survivors to psychosocial and legal services.
- **Inclusive service points:** Ensure women can physically access food, cash, and medical assistance distribution points, accounting for caregiving responsibilities and safety concerns.

4.7.3 Gender-responsive budgeting and resource allocation²⁷

- **Dedicated funding lines:** Including ring-fenced allocations for women's health, GBV prevention, and gender-sensitive livelihood recovery in national and provincial disaster budgets.
- **Gender budget tagging:** The classification and monitoring of DRR spending by its gender responsiveness (as endorsed in UNDP/IPU budgeting guidance).
- **Conditional cash transfers:** The roll-out of direct post-disaster cash support programmes to women as household heads or caregivers to improve recovery outcomes (as documented in post-tsunami Sri Lanka and Haiti recovery efforts).

4.7.4 Legal and policy instruments²⁸

- **Disaster laws:** These laws must explicitly mandate gender mainstreaming and non-discrimination in all phases of disaster management.
- **Enforce land and housing rights:** Women must retain or gain equal ownership and tenure security in post-disaster reconstruction efforts.
- **Gender impact assessments:** Conduct and publish assessments before, during, and after disasters to evaluate how policies affect women and girls differently and to assist with improving the availability of sex-disaggregated data.

4.7.5 Data and accountability²⁹

- **SADDD (Sex-, Age-, and Disability-Disaggregated Data):** Government agencies can be requested to collect and report this data to inform targeted relief and recovery.
- **Parliamentary oversight:** Committees should regularly scrutinise national disaster frameworks and response reports for gender equity indicators.

²⁶ UN Women (2021).

²⁷ IPU (2017).

²⁸ UNDRR (2022).

²⁹ UN Women (2020).

- **Scorecards and audits:** Tools such as the UN Women’s *Gender Equality in Disaster Risk Reduction* scorecards can be used to assess and track progress to inform monitoring and evaluation practices.³⁰

5. CONCLUSION

Disasters intensify pre-existing gender inequalities, placing women and girls at greater risk of economic loss, psychosocial harm, and exclusion from decision-making, while men face elevated physical and mental health risks. Yet, when gender-sensitive disaster interventions are contextualised within local cultures, and designed with transformative intent, they can protect, empower, and promote resilience.

Parliaments play a unique and invaluable role in mainstreaming gender in disaster resilience and response programmes through their position in terms of representation, lawmaking and oversight, including passing and reviewing government budgets and expenditure and facilitating cooperative governance.

By requesting sex-disaggregated data, they are empowered to conduct meaningful oversight of the impact of disaster resilience and response programmes of governments. Furthermore, by ensuring that adequate data is collected and factored in across various stages of planning and implementation of such programmes, accurate and impactful monitoring and evaluation will ultimately generate required insights about the efficacy of initiatives.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andlib, Z., Makonya, G. M., & Mateva, K. I. (2021). *Understanding Gender Dimensions of Disaster Impacts on Agriculture in the Global South*.

Care Climate Justice Centre (2024) COP29 – Only 8 out of 78 world leaders attending are women [Internet] Available from <https://careclimatechange.org/cop29-only-8-out-of-78-world-leaders-attending-are-women/> [Accessed on 23 July 2025]

Dhungel, R., & Ojha, R. N. (2012). *Women's empowerment for disaster risk reduction and emergency response in Nepal*.

Drolet, J., Dominelli, L., Alston, M., Ersing, R. L., & Mathbor, G. (2015). *Women rebuilding lives post-disaster: innovative community practices for building resilience and promoting sustainable development*.

Flowerr, T. M. (2009). *Gender Matters: Critical Disaster Risk and Care Distinctions in Preparedness, Triage, and Psychosocial Needs. Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*.

³⁰ UN Women (2024a).

Food and Agricultural Organisation Regional Office for Africa (2021) Women's leadership and gender equality in climate action and disaster risk reduction in Africa

Fordham, M., & Meyreles, L. (2013). *Gender Aspects of Disaster Management*.

Idemudia, E., William, J., Boehnke, K., & Wyatt, G. (2013). *Gender Differences in Trauma and Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms among Displaced Zimbabweans in South Africa*. *Journal of Traumatic Stress Disorders & Treatment*.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (2006) Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: a guide to good practice [Online] Available at < <http://archive.ipu.org/dem-e/guide/guide-7.htm> > [Accessed 30 July 2025]

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (2017) Parliament and the sustainable development goals: a self-assessment toolkit. [Online] Available at < <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/toolkits/2017-01/parliaments-and-sustainable-development-goals-self-assessment-toolkit> > [Accessed 31 July 2025]

Joseph, D. D., & Doon, R. A. (2023). The Impact of Climate Change on Vulnerable Populations: Social Responses to a Changing Environment (p. 234). MDPI-Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute.

Le Roux, J. & Madlala, D. (2017) Strengthening SADC Disaster Management Protocols as a mechanism to enhance the regional response to environmental disasters. South African Parliamentary Research Unit.

Levendale, C. & Ngqwala, N. (2023) Integrating gender-responsive approaches in climate policies, with particular reference to food systems and disaster recovery – what is the role for parliament? South African Parliamentary Research Unit.

Lewis, N. (2016). *Sustainable development through a gendered lens: climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction*. *Reviews on Environmental Health*.

Luna, K., & Hilhorst, D. (2022). *Gendered experience of disaster: Women's account of evacuation, relief and recovery in Nepal*. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*.

Lwamba, E., Shisler, S., Ridlehoover, W., Kupfer, M., Tshabalala, N., et al. (2021). *Strengthening women's empowerment and gender equality in fragile contexts towards peaceful and inclusive societies: A systematic review and meta-analysis*. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*.

Mapedza, E., Amarnath, G., Matheswaran, K., & Nhamo, L. (2019). *Drought and the gendered livelihoods implications for smallholder farmers in the Southern Africa Development Community region*.

Nepal, U. (2020). *A Study on Potential Leadership Approaches to Address Gender-Based Constraints in Effective Preparedness for Disasters in Nepal*.

Rambau, T. S., Beukes, L. D., & Fraser, W. (2012). *Disaster Risk Reduction through School Learners' Awareness and Preparedness*.

Richter, R., & Flowers, T. (2008). *Gendered dimensions of disaster care: critical distinctions in female psychosocial needs, triage, pain assessment, and care*. *American Journal of Disaster Medicine*.

Sapir, D. (1993). *Natural and man-made disasters: the vulnerability of women-headed households and children without families*. *World Health Statistics Quarterly*.

Smyth, I., & Vu Minh Hai. (2012). *The Disaster Crunch Model: Guidelines for a Gendered Approach*.

Tandlich, R., Chirenda, T. G., & Srinivas, C. S. (2013). *Preliminary assessment of the gender aspects of disaster vulnerability and loss of human life in South Africa*.

United Nations (2018) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: General recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change [Internet] Available from <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1626306?ln=en&v=pdf> [Accessed 23 July 2025]

United Nations Office on Disaster Risk Reduction (2020) Gender and disaster risk reduction and response in the context of COVID-19: The Asia-Pacific region [Online] Available at < https://wrd.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Action%20Brief_Gender%20%26%20DRR%20in%20Context%20of%20COVID-19_Final.pdf > [Accessed 31 July 2025]

United Nations Office on Disaster Risk Reduction (2022), Policy Brief: Gender Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction, Policy Brief 3 No.3, March 2022, [Internet] available from <https://www.undrr.org/media/78724/download?startDownload=20250723> [Accessed 23 July 2025]

United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) (2023) Early Warnings for All: Executive Action Plan for 2023 – 2027 [Online] Available at < <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/early-warnings-for-all> > [Accessed 22 July 2025]

United Nations Women (2021) Gender Equality checklist for post-disaster needs assessments [Online] Available at < https://wrd.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Gender%20PDNA%20checklist_rev1_v2.pdf > [Accessed 31 July 2025]

United Nations Women (2023a) Why climate change matters for women [Internet] Available from <https://data.unwomen.org/features/why-climate-change-matters-women> [Accessed 24 July 2025]

United Nations Women (2023b) Women's Leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction [Internet] Available from https://wrd.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/GRISFDRR_Note15.pdf [Accessed 24 July 2025]

United Nations Women (2024) At a Glance: Suggested Commitments for Addressing Gender Gaps in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Resilience [Internet] available from <https://wrd.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/formatted%20-%202024%20UPDATE%20-%20OP%20-%20Technical%20support%20paper%20-%20RPs%20and%20GP.pdf>. [Accessed 23 July 2025]

United Nations Women (2024a) Disaster Resilience Scorecard for Cities: Addendum for Gender Equality and Intersectionality [Online] Available at < <https://wrd.unwomen.org/practice/resources/disaster-resilience-scorecard-cities-addendum-gender-equality-and> > [Accessed 29 July 2025]

United Nations Women (n.d.) Gender-responsive risk assessment [Internet], available from <https://wrd.unwomen.org/practice/topics/risk-assessment#:~:text=For%20example%2C%20the%20collection%20of%20disaggregated%20quantitative,for%20comprehensive%20gender%2Dresponsive%20and%20inclusive%20risk%20assessments.> [Accessed 23 July 2025]