

The United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
14-18 March 2015, Sendai, Japan

High Level Multi-stakeholder Partnership Dialogue “Mobilizing Women’s Leadership for Disaster Risk Reduction” – SUMMARY REPORT FOR PLENARY MEETING ON 18 MARCH

Session: High Level Multi-stakeholder Partnership Dialogue “Mobilizing Women’s Leadership for Disaster Risk Reduction”
Co-Chair: H.E. Sanae Takaichi, Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan
Co-Chair: H.E. Loren Legarda, Senator of the Philippines
Time and Date: Sunday 14 March, 15:00 to 18:00

President of the Conference,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

The High Level Multi-stakeholder Partnership Dialogue titled ‘Mobilizing Women’s Leadership for Disaster Risk Reduction’ took place on Sunday, March 14, 2015. The Dialogue was co-chaired by H.E. Sanae Takaichi, Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan and H.E. Ms Loren Legarda, Senator of the Philippines.

The Dialogue welcomed a key note address by H.E. Mr Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, reaffirming Japan’s commitment to mobilizing women’s leadership in disaster risk reduction, which will be a key element of Sendai Cooperation Initiative announced at WCDRR.

Participants saw the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the process to developing a new framework for disaster risk reduction as a key opportunity to highlight the essential role of women in reducing risk and building resilience. Participants called for the outcomes of Sendai to become a turning point by recognizing women’s indispensable role in disaster preparedness, management, response and recovery.

Numerous examples were shared by participants illustrating how women at every level play a constructive and productive role in disaster risk reduction historically and today. Women and girls possess skills and capacity to build resilience, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. Examples ranged from grass roots actions, awareness raising, early warning, to city planning, firefighting, as well as adopting gender-markers in international financing for emergencies and providing resources to promote this issue and facilitate the engagement and leadership of women in disaster risk reduction efforts.

Participants called for actions that ensure governments scale up the degree and scope of engagement of women in building resilience at national and local level with accountability mechanisms and indicators to track progress. Women should not just be educated and informed, they need to be empowered and heard, and opportunities should be provided to them to share the knowledge and vision they have to reduce disaster risks. Education, equal access to training, capacity building, and information are critical to strengthen the

engagement and participation of women in disaster risk reduction, including in the areas of science and technology and innovation.

Participants acknowledged that the Hyogo Framework for Action over the past ten years facilitated the promotion of gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction. However, much remains to be done to translate words into action. The global disaster risk reduction and development community need to further advance this agenda, and bring gender equality and women's empowerment at the core of risk sensitive development. Mobilizing women's leadership in disaster risk reduction requires dedicated, sustained and targeted actions. Both long term efforts to break down barriers such as gender inequality and discrimination against women, which systematically hinders women's equal participation and leadership as well as efforts to increase women's opportunities, resources and capacities to engage in disaster risk reduction and overcome these barriers.

Accountability needs to be strengthened through monitoring progress with clear indicators in implementing Sendai outcomes in a gender responsive manner with linkages to international frameworks, agreements and commitments related to gender equality and disaster risk reduction e.g. reporting on the Convention the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Commission on the Status of Women and related resolutions, Beijing Agenda for Global Action on Gender-Sensitive DRR, and others.

It is equally important for all actors to ensure gender analysis is a core component in development and disaster risk reduction planning and programming. Using sex and age disaggregated data and gender analysis is an essential planning tool for developing local and national development and risk reduction plans. Taking measures to address women's sexual and reproductive needs and to prevent gender-based violence including human trafficking in the events of disasters, when women are found to be at higher risk of victimization, is necessary and the United Nations is committed to continue working on these areas.

Strengthening women's leadership in disaster risk reduction requires addressing the issue of resources, technical and financial including gender budgeting in disaster risk reduction, the issue of representation at all levels, in all sectors and in all risk reduction analysis, planning and implementation, and finally the fundamental issue of rights to ensure that women rights are respected. Inequality itself is a risk factor undermining disaster risk reduction. Participants strongly emphasized the need to depart from traditional views of incapability and stereotyping of women as vulnerable groups.

Participants voiced commitments to support empowerment of women, to be inclusive and engage men and women in actions, to develop capacity and knowledge of women and girls, to support, engage and provide resources to women and grassroots leaders, to invest in order to make increased availability of sex and age disaggregated data, to prevent gender-based violence and to ensure that disaster risk management investments are 100% gender-sensitive.

Participants reaffirmed that investment in empowering women and strengthening their leadership role being at the frontline in disaster risk reduction is critical for the resilience of

the community at large and will benefit everyone, men and women. Resilient women will lead to resilient nations and communities.

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