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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters

Gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to resolution [56/2](#) of the Commission on the Status of Women, in which the Secretary-General was requested to report on the implementation of the resolution.

* [E/CN.6/2014/1](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to resolution 56/2 of the Commission on the Status of Women, in which the Secretary-General was requested to report on the implementation of the resolution and to make suggestions on how to further address gender equality and women's empowerment in natural disasters within the existing United Nations framework. It covers the period from March 2012 to July 2013.

2. A note verbale was circulated to all Member States and a questionnaire was transmitted to the members of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action soliciting contributions to the report. Replies were received from 15 Member States, 11 United Nations entities, 3 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 1 academic institution and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender Standby Capacity Project.¹

3. As highlighted in resolution 56/2, humanitarian crises have different and specific impacts on men, women, boys and girls. In particular, gender roles and norms limit the capacities and resources of women and girls to respond with resilience for themselves and their families, while disruptions to services and the breakdown of protection mechanisms and the rule of law can affect them the most.

4. Yet women and girls can be leaders in preparation for and response to crises. They are not passive recipients of humanitarian assistance and protection; rather they should be fully engaged as agents of change in all preparedness, response and recovery efforts and empowered. A lack of adequate gender analysis, based on accurate and timely sex and age disaggregated data, and direct consultation with women on the forms of assistance and protection they need and the role they can play undermines the effectiveness of humanitarian response. It can increase insecurity and reverse previous gains made towards gender equality. Conversely, with the appropriate use of gender equality programming, humanitarian crises can present opportunities for new and more progressive gender roles and relationships to emerge.

II. Reporting period in review

5. Major natural disasters in 2012 included Typhoon Bopha in the Philippines, Hurricane Sandy in the Caribbean and the United States, the ongoing drought across

¹ Member States: Argentina, Germany, Gambia, Honduras, Israel, Japan, Macedonia, Mauritius, Paraguay, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and United States of America; United Nations entities: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and World Food Programme; NGOs: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Women's Refugee Council and Youth in Action; Academic institution: Monash University.

the Sahel region, flooding in Nigeria, Pakistan, India and Korea and earthquakes in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Guatemala, Mexico and China.²

6. While the number of major natural disasters in 2012 was comparatively low on an annual basis, the same year was marked by high levels of disaster-inflicted economic loss (\$138 billion). In human terms, 124.5 million people were affected, including 9,655 killed³ and 32.4 million displaced.⁴ Such high levels of economic loss and disruption to people's lives during a relatively calm period in terms of large-scale disasters is a clear indication of the exposure of an increasing number of people, as well as their economic assets and livelihoods, to disaster risk. While the economic losses in monetary terms were highest in industrialized countries — the impact of Hurricane Sandy in the United States in particular — developing countries were disproportionately affected by natural disasters, such as the economic damage to Samoa being equivalent to 19 per cent of its annual gross domestic product (GDP).⁵

7. In 2012, according to the Financial Tracking System of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the total paid contributions to all humanitarian funding came to approximately \$8.4 billion, of which \$407 million was specifically for natural disasters. Of the total humanitarian funding, the Financial Tracking System reports 24.6 per cent (\$2.069 billion) was for programmes identified as having the potential to contribute significantly to gender equality, while 3 per cent (\$257 million) was for programmes identified as advancing gender equality among the beneficiary population according to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee gender marker tool.⁶

III. Developments in inter-governmental and intra-agency strategies and policies

8. During the period under review, gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of natural disasters was highlighted in a number of important resolutions and outcome documents adopted by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies. The themes of these resolutions included sustainable development, resilience, humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction and specifically note the need to continue to improve attention to gender equality in humanitarian action, reflecting that, despite progress made, there is still much room for improvement.

9. In resolution [66/288](#), paragraph 188, and in resolution [67/209](#), the General Assembly recognized the important linkages between disaster risk reduction,

² See Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, *Annual Disaster Statistical Review* (Brussels, 2012).

³ See United Nations Secretariat, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *World Humanitarian Data and Trends* (New York, 2013).

⁴ See Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Estimates 2012: People displaced by disasters* (Geneva, 2013).

⁵ See A/68/89.

⁶ This is based on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee gender marker tool that codes, on a 0 to 2 scale, whether or not a humanitarian project is designed well enough to ensure that women/girls and men/boys will benefit equally from it or that it will advance gender equality.

recovery and development and referred to the need to integrate gender consideration into all phases of disaster risk management.

10. General Assembly resolutions [66/227](#) and [67/231](#) are both concerned with improving the effectiveness of humanitarian action in the context of natural disasters. Both underline the importance of ensuring women's full and equal participation in decision making as well as gender mainstreaming in all aspects of humanitarian action, including disaster risk reduction, response and recovery. In these resolutions, the Assembly encouraged Member States and the United Nations system to support national initiatives that address the differentiated impact of natural disasters on the affected population through the collection and analysis of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability and improved needs assessments.

11. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolutions [2012/3](#) and [2013/6](#), reiterated the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into humanitarian action, requesting all actors to ensure that all aspects and phases of humanitarian action address the needs of women and men of all ages and abilities by improving the collection and use of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability. Furthermore, references were made to the need for Member States and organizations to strengthen the response to sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian settings and to continue efforts to prevent, investigate and prosecute such acts and strengthen services to victims. Women's important contributions to humanitarian efforts at community and national level through volunteerism were also acknowledged and the United Nations system was reminded of the need to consider gender equality in the recruitment of senior humanitarian staff.

12. The outcome document of the high-level dialogue held by the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May 2013, "High-level Dialogue Communiqué: Ahead of the Wave: Leading the Way to Resilience",⁷ recommended the inclusion of disaster risk reduction as a central part of any post-2015 framework agreed to by participating Governments and experts. The document acknowledged both the need to support the most vulnerable, including women, in building their resilience to disasters, while also recognizing the critical role of women in the protection of vulnerable groups, and in the resilience of their communities. However, none of the actions recommended by the Dialogue referred to gender equality or women's empowerment, despite the many important recommendations on this issue emerging both from the various preceding regional platforms on disaster risk reduction, as well as the side events at the Global Platform, including the event "Women making a difference".

13. The United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience,⁸ endorsed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in April 2013 presents a joint strategy for the integration of disaster risk reduction into all United Nations work at the country level. The Plan of Action states that gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction and resilience policies, programmes and investments will be promoted.

14. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG), the World Bank and the European Union have collaborated on the development of a joint post-disaster needs assessment tool. The assessment guide, endorsed by UNDG in May 2013, includes a

⁷ Available at <http://www.preventionweb.net/go/gpdr13>.

⁸ See <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/plan-action-disaster-risk-reduction-resilience>.

chapter on the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment in the post-disaster needs assessment process and deliverables. It includes in its guiding principles the need to ensure the participation of the affected population and focus on the most vulnerable sections therein (including female-headed households) as well as to mainstream cross-cutting issues such as gender equality. It also mentions the importance of including a gender analysis that considers the effect of disaster on gender power relations and to capture important gender dimensions and implications when assessing the economic impact on productive activities in the informal sector, subsistence farming and unpaid work.⁹

IV. Actions taken by Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian agencies

A. Mainstreaming gender perspectives into policies, plans, strategies, funding, programmes and partnerships

15. The mandatory use of the gender marker in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs consolidated appeals process has been particularly significant in the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into humanitarian action since 2012.¹⁰

16. A number of Member States now consider the gender marker in their voluntary donor funding decisions. For example, Germany cites the systematic integration of gender perspectives into humanitarian aid as an operational requirement for effective quality programming. As such, 73 per cent (\$131 million) of its 2012 humanitarian funding went to projects with gender marker codes of 2a or 2b. Also, Sweden channelled 74 per cent (\$70.3 million) of its 2012 humanitarian funding to projects coded 2a and 2b and has further committed not to fund any humanitarian projects with a code of 0 in the 2013 consolidated appeals process and beyond. Similarly, a growing number of United Nations entities (The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF and IOM) have committed to ensuring that all of their programmes would meet a 2a or 2b standard.

17. Japan, Mauritius, Spain, Honduras and Turkey reported the recent development of legislation, policies and projects that further integrate gender equality into their national humanitarian action strategies. As an example, Japan's Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office, in collaboration with the Disaster Management Department of the Cabinet Office, issued its "Guidelines on disaster prevention and reconstruction from the perspectives of gender equality", which are based on the lessons learned from the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami and other disaster responses. These guidelines instruct local public entities on how to integrate gender equality into their prevention, response and reconstruction

⁹ United Nations Development Group, the World Bank, and the European Union, "Post-Disaster Needs Assessment", (2013); available at www.recoveryplatform.org/outfile.php?id=1005&href=http.

¹⁰ The gender marker is a tool that codes, on a 0-2 scale, whether a humanitarian project is designed to ensure that women, girls, men and boys will benefit equally from it or advance gender equality in any other way. A code of 0 means gender is not reflected in the project design, code 1 means gender equality is reflected in one or two components of the project's design, code 2a means the project has the potential to contribute significantly to gender equality and code 2b means the principle purpose of the project is to advance gender equality.

strategies, as well as clarify the roles of local agencies and women's groups in this process and to highlight the importance of women's input into decision-making processes.

18. The further development of gender integrated humanitarian action policies and strategies, including for natural disasters, has been advanced by the adoption of a people centred, human rights-based approach by a number of key stakeholders. This is based on the principle of ensuring that Governments and humanitarian stakeholders are held accountable for non-discriminatory participation and inclusion, based on the identified vulnerabilities and needs of a crisis affected population in its entirety. For example, the 2012 revised Policy Instruction on gender equality (Gender Equality: A People Centred Approach) of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is intended to ensure awareness of the needs, capacities and voices of all affected population groups. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies recently developed its strategic framework on gender and diversity issues to guide its governance, policy and advocacy work, including its approach to humanitarian action. The framework provides direction to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and its member national societies to ensure that their actions are non-discriminatory towards people of all ages and to promote gender equality and respect for diversity throughout their work. In addition, UN-Women updated its strategic plan (2014-2017) to include gender equality and women's empowerment in all facets of humanitarian action — preparedness, resilience, response and recovery — as central to its core mandate.

19. In July 2013, the European Commission published its staff working-document "Gender in Humanitarian Aid: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance. It outlines the approach of the European Commission to advancing gender integration into humanitarian action through programming, capacity-building, advocacy and accountability. In it, the European Commission recognizes that for effective, quality programming, a systematic approach to the integration of a gender perspective in humanitarian aid is an operational requirement and, as a consequence, is a matter of compliance with the humanitarian mandate of the European Union, as well as other international laws and commitments. Such a specific policy from one of the world's largest humanitarian donor agencies will help elevate the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian action.

B. Capacity development

20. One of the limitations in efforts to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment is the lack of gender expertise professionals in the humanitarian system on how to integrate gender equality among international humanitarian agencies and national institutions and civil society. Addressing this issue needs to become a priority for all humanitarian stakeholders through their recruitment and training policies.

21. In 2012, the national authorities of 10 countries, namely, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand, worked with IOM, as the global lead agency for camp coordination and camp management in natural disasters, to train over 3,400 humanitarian counterparts, including government staff and community members, on the importance of equal participation of men and women and effective protection from gender-based violence.

22. National and local authorities in Chad, Colombia, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Zimbabwe have made progress in developing standing, sustainable capacity on gender integrations at the national and local levels. Working with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, they have provided training for representatives on a variety of gender integrated humanitarian practices, including the project management cycle, use of the gender marker, the importance of data collection and information management.

23. Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation offers a three-week training workshop on crisis intervention in the community that addresses the empowerment of women in natural disasters. Over the past four years this training has been offered to 90 humanitarian professionals from 26 countries.

24. The gender standby capacity project provides support to United Nations country teams and to the global level coordination mechanisms to strengthen coordination for gender mainstreaming and gender equality in humanitarian action. The project has also designed and is now piloting the multi-module "Gender in humanitarian action" facilitation toolkit, including a module on gender in disaster preparedness. The gender training has been designed to be readily customized to in-country needs. To date, pilot trainings have been conducted for the humanitarian country teams in Jordan and Rwanda.

C. Equality of access and opportunity and the participation of women in decision making

25. Disasters affect women, girls, boys and men in different ways; gender inequalities increase women's vulnerability and limit their access to the information and resources they need to reduce the risks posed by disasters. In general, natural disasters kill more women than men and kill women at a younger age than men.¹¹ This is a direct result of women's lack of influence or control over decision-making, social networks, transportation, information, land, personal mobility or secure housing and employment, coupled with differences in self-rescue abilities (many of which are mediated by socially constructed gender differences). It is therefore imperative that women be provided the opportunity to voice their needs and make authoritative decisions on how they should be addressed in their communities as individuals and in collective organizations.

26. A number of Member States have made concerted efforts to place women in key decision-making positions. For example, the core staff of Gambia's regional food management committees are women, who are provided training on assessments, planning, implementation and monitoring for natural disasters. In Macedonia, women have been appointed as the managers of five of the regional crisis management centres to coordinate preparedness and response programmes.

27. Equal participation in and access to services and information are also key to ensuring effective outcomes for all people living in disaster-prone environments. Paraguay requires equal inclusion of women in training on early warning systems and other risk management programmes. Of 1,500 people trained in recent years, 40 per cent have been women. In Pakistan, national and provincial governments, in conjunction with grass-roots women's organizations, have worked with the Office

¹¹ See World Health Organization, "Gender, Climate Change, and Health" (Geneva, 2011).

for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN-Women and UN-Habitat in the development of early warning systems, with an emphasis on access and participation for women and vulnerable and marginalized groups by training them in their use.

28. Argentina's Comisión Cascos Blancos (White Helmets Commission) approach to disaster risk reduction and emergency response strategies include situational gender-analysis to survey the context's main gender issues and to identify the means to ensure that women can participate directly in local risk management. Similarly, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has also supported women's increased participation in disaster risk reduction, early warning systems and crisis planning. As an example, USAID engaged adolescent girls in community level disaster risk reduction through a Southern Africa regional programme including Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Not only did this work strengthen the respective communities' resilience to future disaster risk, it also empowered adolescent girls as agents for constructive change.

D. Livelihoods, economic opportunities, vocational and technical skills training

29. In the context of natural disasters, women and men have different resources available to them to shape their coping strategies for survival. In general, women have less access to livelihoods assets and opportunities than men and as such can find themselves forced to turn to risky behaviour such as prostitution or transactional sex as a means of survival. Crises also tend to increase the burdens of care and household responsibilities for women, making their ability to economically support themselves and their dependants more difficult. The design and implementation of livelihood programmes need to be based on a careful analysis of the specific needs of the crisis-affected men and women and the means of providing the opportunities to address them.

30. Widely unreported extensive disasters and risks, such as localized flooding, landslides and wildfires, have a persistent, ongoing, debilitating impact on the poor and the vulnerable, especially women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and minorities. While extensive risk, defined as the "exposure of dispersed populations to repeated or persistent hazard conditions of low or moderate intensity, often of a highly localized nature, which can lead to debilitating cumulative disaster impacts",¹² is accountable for just 13 per cent of disaster mortality rates, it is accountable for 42 per cent of economic losses.¹³ Extensive damage to housing, crops, livestock and livelihoods is much more acutely felt among low-income groups who usually live in the most at-risk areas, often with little infrastructure or public services to provide support in times of crisis. Low-income groups are also more reliant on informal-sector small businesses, which are less likely than larger ones to recover from these economic shocks. The informal sector is usually excluded from disaster risk management strategies (such as insurance) and social protection schemes for destitute entrepreneurs and their employees. Given their

¹² See United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; available at www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology.

¹³ See United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), *2013 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: From Shared Risk to Shared Value: the Business Case for Disaster Risk Reduction* (Geneva, 2013).

overrepresentation in the informal sector, it is inevitably women and youth who are disproportionately affected by extensive disaster and risk.¹⁴

31. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Global Environment Fund's Lower Usuthu Smallholder Irrigation project in Swaziland aims to mitigate the impact of climate change and provide women with marketable skills to construct water harvesting tanks for others, which alleviate the total time spent collecting water and assists women in growing vegetables at home for additional food security and extra income.

32. The use of cash-transfers or cash-vouchers serve as a flexible tool of particular use in empowering women to prioritize their household needs. In Gambia, the National Disaster Management Agency provided cash-voucher payments to vulnerable female-headed households that had been affected by the ongoing Sahel drought, coupled with training on nutrition, health and hygiene.

E. Sexual and reproductive health

33. During natural disasters the likelihood of rape, sexual exploitation and risky behaviour greatly increases the risk of unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and complications regarding reproductive health.¹⁵ As such, access to reproductive health care and education is crucial for adolescents and adults in crisis-affected settings who should be made aware of their right to access these services.

34. An official sub-working group of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction health platform has taken up the issue of mainstreaming sexual and reproductive health into health emergency and disaster risk management. The group, comprised of members of the World Health Organization, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, Women's Refugee Commission, CARE, International Medical Corps, International Planned Parenthood Federation and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, released a policy brief in October of 2012, and is currently working on the field review of a practical, field-friendly checklist to support the integration of sexual and reproductive health within emergency and disaster risk management systems.

35. In the Philippines, national and local government agencies have trained health workers through UNFPA on the mainstreaming of gender and sexual and reproductive health within health emergency and disaster risk management programmes.

¹⁴ International Labour Organization, "Decent work and the informal economy" (Geneva, 2002); Guillermo E. Perry and others, *Informality: Exit and Exclusion* (World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2007).

¹⁵ United Nations Population Fund, "Motherhood in Childhood: facing the challenge of adolescent pregnancy" (2013); Plan International, "Because I am a Girl: The state of the world's girls, 2013: In Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Girls and Disasters"; Women's Refugee Commission and others, *Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Programs in Humanitarian Settings: An In-depth Look at Family Planning Services* (2012).

F. Protection and gender-based violence

36. Social and institutional systems of physical and social protection can be severely disrupted during humanitarian crises, greatly increasing the risk of gender-based violence in all its forms. The onus thus falls on Member States and humanitarian agencies to provide access to the full range of protection and survivor services (psychosocial, legal and medical) that address gender-based violence concerns.

37. During the reporting period a number of entities established codes of conduct and trained staff on the definition and impact of protection from sexual exploitation and abuse by working humanitarian actors. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has integrated protection from sexual exploitation and abuse as a core module into its new staff induction package and has extended the same training to its existing staff. Since June 2011, IOM has actively engaged in training its staff members on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. To date, 77 per cent of its international staff and 84 per cent of its national staff have been trained worldwide.

38. Agencies have also developed strategies to guide their approaches to addressing gender-based violence. Since its adoption in 2011, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has been utilizing its first ever strategy on violence prevention, mitigation and response in their approach to humanitarian action and have taken action to ensure that prevention of gender-based violence is integrated across its disaster and emergency response systems. Within the Global Protection Cluster, UNICEF and UNFPA, as lead entities of the gender-based violence area of responsibility, have established a five-person gender-based violence rapid response team to be deployed in any emergency within 72 hours to provide technical and coordination expertise to prevent, mitigate and respond to gender-based violence risks. Since its inception in early 2012, the task team has been deployed 35 times.

39. Since the earthquake of 2011, Japan has provided counselling and protection services to survivors of the disaster living in shelters or temporary housing through local police units, including female officers. The Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office, along with local authorities and civil society, has also provided women with a phone-line and in-person support service, in order to allow women to report their concerns or incidents of violence.

V. Monitoring and accountability

40. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Sub-working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action has been taking the lead for advocating and coordinating the integration of gender equality into disaster response, supporting the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, its members and subsidiary bodies in the realization of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy Statement Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action of 2008.¹⁶ In the reporting period, the sub-working group, has, among other things, provided support to the cluster system through its operational arm, the gender standby capacity project; provided gender information bulletins for Mali and

¹⁶ Available at www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/downloaddoc.aspx?docID=44978&type=pdf.

the Syrian Arab Republic; promoted and distributed Inter-Agency Standing Committee publications and provided technical support to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group on the Cluster Approach, the consolidated appeal process reform, the needs assessment task force, the implementation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee gender marker tools and guidelines; undertook a two-phase study on the impact of gender equality programming on humanitarian outcomes; and hosted a side event at the 2013 Economic and Social Council humanitarian affairs segment on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

41. However, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Sub-working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action remains a voluntary body (current co-chairs are UN-Women, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, UNHCR and the Women's Refugee Commission), serving in an advisory capacity to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and limiting its role to recommendations and advice. Having a formal mechanism within the Standing Committee with appropriate monitoring resources and capacity will enable it to deliver on fully integrating gender equality considerations into the humanitarian assistance agenda.

42. In terms of monitoring the gender equality results of humanitarian programming, there are few practical tools available. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee gender marker, as it is currently formulated, only reflects consideration to gender equality at the project design phase. It is not used as a means of monitoring the outcome and deliverables of a specific programme and, as such, the implementing agency is not necessarily held accountable to the gender equality commitments written into the programme's design. This lack of adequate monitoring tools for assessing progress towards gender equality in humanitarian action needs to be addressed so that implementing agencies and Member States can be held accountable to their commitments to the issue.

43. With regard to monitoring funding levels for gender equality programming for natural disasters, the Financial Tracking System of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs does not generate reports that break down natural disaster specific humanitarian funding by its contribution to gender equality. This makes it difficult to analyse funding trends on gender equality and women's empowerment programming in the context of natural disasters.

44. United Nations agencies and Member States recognize in their policy statements and guidance documents the importance of gathering and utilizing data disaggregated by sex, age and disability to inform the design, implementation and monitoring of humanitarian programming. However, more needs to be done to ensure that all decisions, planning and monitoring of humanitarian action are properly informed and based on timely accurate information that reflects the different needs of men, women, boys and girls. As an example, the 2013 "World Humanitarian Data and Trends Report" of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs contains no data disaggregated by sex, age or disability.

45. UNDP works with national statistics bureaux to gather gender disaggregated, socioeconomic data to inform decisions on disaster risk reduction strategic planning. The agency reported significant variation across the regions. In Asia, countries including Indonesia, the Philippines and India are quite advanced in their analysis and use of disaggregated data, reflecting long engagement and investment in disaster risk reduction in the region. Similarly, in Latin America and the Caribbean,

disaggregated data is routinely collected and analysed to inform disaster policies, programmes and activities.

VI. Conclusion and recommendations

46. While progress has been made in terms of increasing attention to and efforts to implement the recommendations of resolution 56/2 of the Commission on the Status of Women at international, national and local levels, more needs to be done. Continued efforts are required to ensure that Member States, the United Nations and the wider humanitarian system utilize a rights-based approach to disaster management and response that identifies and addresses the different needs of men, women, boys and girls.

47. In order to achieve this, the Commission on the Status of Women may call on Governments, United Nations entities and all other humanitarian actors, as relevant, to take the following actions:

Gender integration into policies, plans, strategies, programmes and partnerships

(a) Give gender-equality appropriate consideration in the development of humanitarian policies, plans and strategies, especially in the implementation of the new humanitarian programme cycle approach to the consolidated appeals process recently launched by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; ensure gender equality as an aspect of the humanitarian needs overview, so that it adequately informs the development of the strategic response plan and its budgetary requirements; and ensure that gender equality commitments are included as a mandatory requirement as response monitoring reporting formats and guidance are developed;

(b) Develop disaster risk reduction, risk management, resilience and humanitarian assessments and programming frameworks at the country level (for example, United Nations development assistance frameworks, common country assessments, multi-cluster initial rapid assessments, post-disaster needs assessments, contingency planning, emergency response planning) in collaboration with the gender equality expertise available in the United Nations system, including at UN-Women;

(c) Incorporate gender equality and women's empowerment into international negotiation processes and consultations as they relate to natural disasters, such as the post-2015 development agenda, the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework and the World Humanitarian Summit; and ensure that the consultations towards these are inclusive, allowing for the active engagement and contributions of national and international women's organizations;

Capacity strengthening

(d) In accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan, ensure that adequate financial resources are available for the implementation of gender equality commitments and that these are monitored by a financial resource tracking mechanism that can properly quantify the disbursement of funds to promote gender equality in natural

disasters. Also, provide sufficient resources, technical expertise and institutional capacity in the individual United Nations entities to mainstream gender across all aspects of their humanitarian action strategies, programme planning, implementation and their associated tools, including operational procedures, guidelines, tools, accountability frameworks, monitoring and evaluation and reporting requirements. They should also provide gender balance in recruitment at all levels, including in their humanitarian management, response and assessment teams;

(e) Increase attention to the impact of small scale recurrent natural disasters through additional advocacy and funding to allow for more analysis and response to the gender dimensions of such extensive risks, and their consequences in terms of needs, damages and losses. In estimating the impact of disasters, every effort should be made to capture all productive activity, including the informal sector, subsistence farming and unpaid work, and the important gender dimensions and implications thereof, and reflect these in recovery planning and implementation;

Equality of access and opportunity and the participation of women in decision-making

(f) Equally consult and engage with women, girls, boys and men of all ages and subgroups of the crisis-affected population in all phases and levels of humanitarian action, including resilience-building and risk management;

(g) Recognize, support and invest in grass-roots women's organizations in the implementation of disaster risk reduction, response and recovery efforts in natural disaster-affected contexts and make available funding mechanisms to support their work and enhance their organizational capacity;

(h) Increase efforts to strengthen the capacity of and collaboration between local and national women's machineries, national and subnational governments, local organizations and humanitarian actors on integration of gender equality and women's empowerment across all phases of humanitarian action in the context of natural disasters;

Livelihoods, economic opportunities, vocational and technical skills training

(i) Ensure gender balance in beneficiary selection for economic relief and recovery and/or livelihoods programming, income-generating activities or vocational and technical skills training to strengthen resilience to disasters. These should also factor in women's time, mobility and security and other possible constraints on their participation;

Reproductive health, protection and gender-based violence

(j) Identify and address the protection concerns and survivor service needs of women, girls, boys and men prior to, during and in the aftermath of a disaster, without discrimination and in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law. This includes, but is not limited to, trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence, forced marriage and harmful coping strategies such as transactional sex;

(k) **Provide adequate information on and access to the full range of services for sexual and reproductive health to all women and men of all ages affected by natural disasters;**

Monitoring and accountability

(l) **The Inter-Agency Standing Committee needs to ensure that its existing gender-focused subsidiary body is able to appropriately influence and guide its work such that it delivers on its 2008 gender equality policy statement.¹⁶ This policy statement sets out the actions required to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are fully incorporated into all Inter-Agency Standing Committee work for more effective and coherent humanitarian action. This is in line with the Economic and Social Council endorsement of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan accountability framework for gender equality and women's empowerment;¹⁷**

(m) **Address the lack of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability, both in terms of its collection and usage and the quality of gender analysis; Member States and the United Nations system should place gender experts with specific technical skills within the relevant substantive sections of United Nations and Member States entities to provide guidance and training to relevant staff on undertaking the gathering of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability and its use in analysis and programming from a gender perspective;**

(n) **Further develop gender markers and other monitoring tools to cover the entire humanitarian programme cycle, not just programme design; all funding agencies should utilize a gender-marker scoring system to guide their funding decisions and require their funded partners to report on their associated gender commitments.**

¹⁷ See Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/24.