



# Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

### Draft General Recommendation No. 35 on the Gender- related dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in a Changing Climate

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## I. Introduction

1. Climate change is exacerbating the risks and impact of disasters globally by increasing the frequency and severity of weather and climate hazards and by heightening the vulnerability of communities to these hazards.<sup>1</sup> The human rights consequences of climate change-related disasters are already apparent in political and economic instability, growing inequality, declining food and water security and in increased threats to health and livelihoods around the world.<sup>2</sup>

2. Disasters and climate change affect women, girls, boys and men differently and many women and girls experience disproportionate risks and impacts as a result of climate change related disasters.<sup>3</sup> Situations of crisis exacerbate pre-existing gender inequalities and also compound intersecting forms of discrimination that affect some women, such as women living in poverty, women with disabilities and older women, to a different degree or in different ways than men or other women.<sup>4</sup>

3. In many contexts, gender inequalities constrain the influence and control that women and girls have over decisions governing their lives as well as their access to resources such as credit, food, water, agricultural inputs, land, energy, technologies, education, health, adequate housing, social protection and employment. As a result of these inequalities, women and girls are more likely to be exposed to disaster induced risks and losses related to their livelihoods and they are also less able to adapt to changes in climatic conditions. While climate change resilience and adaptation programmes may provide new employment and livelihood opportunities in sectors such as agricultural production, sustainable urban development and clean energies, failure to address the structural barriers faced by women in accessing their rights could exacerbate existing gender-based inequalities.

4. Women and girls have increased levels of mortality in situations of disaster.<sup>5</sup> Gender-based economic inequalities mean that women, and female-headed households in particular, are more likely to be poor and to live in inadequate housing in urban and rural areas of low land value that are vulnerable to the impact of climate-related events such as floods, storms, landslides and other hazards.<sup>6</sup> The higher levels of mortality experienced by women during and following natural disasters are also a result of inequalities they face in

<sup>1</sup> IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Working Group I, Glossary of Terms: [http://ipcc-wg1.ucar.edu/wg1/Report/AR4WG1\\_Print\\_Annexes.pdf](http://ipcc-wg1.ucar.edu/wg1/Report/AR4WG1_Print_Annexes.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Armen Grigor Yan, 'Climate change and disaster risk reduction', ECIS-UNDP, 23 March, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> See, UN Commission on the status of Women, Resolutions on 'Gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disaster', adopted by consensus at the 56th and 58th Sessions in March 2012 and March 2014.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, General Recommendation no. 27 on Older Women and the Protection of their Human Rights, CEDAW/C/GC/27, 2010, para. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Neumayer, Eric and Plumper, Thomas, 2007, 'The Gendered Nature of Natural Disasters: The Impact of Catastrophic Events on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy, 1981–2002', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97(3): 551–566; Röhr, U., 2006 'Gender and Climate Change', *Tiempo*, Issue 59. Available at <http://www.tiempocyberclimate.org/portal/archive/pdf/tiempo59high.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> UN ISDR, 2015, *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: Risk and Poverty in a Changing Climate*, Geneva, Switzerland: UNISDR; UN ESCAP. 2016. *Disasters Without Borders: Regional Resilience for Sustainable Development: Asia Pacific Disaster Report 2015*. Accessed January 2016: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9AqTbpsu1gTSmpFc2d0U0lpeFk/view?pli=1>; C. Bern, J.Sniezek, G.M. Mathbor, M.S. Sidiqi, C. Ronsmans, A.M.R. Chowdhury, A.E. Choudhury, K. Islam, M. Bennish, E. Noji, & R.I.Glass. 1993. "Risk Factors for Mortality in the Bangladesh Cyclone of 1991", in *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 71(1):73-78.

access to health care, food and nutrition, education and information.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the failure to engage in gender-responsive disaster planning means that protective facilities and infrastructures such as early warning mechanisms, shelters and relief programmes have frequently overlooked the specific needs of different groups of women, thereby exposing them to greater risk of mortality and morbidity during and following disasters.<sup>8</sup>

5. Another dimension of gender inequality is the heightened risk of violence faced by women and girls in the aftermath of disasters. In the absence of social protection schemes and in situations where there is food insecurity and limited opportunities for income generation, women and girls are often exposed to sexual violence and exploitation as they attempt to access food and other basic necessities for family members and themselves. A lack of physical security in camps and temporary settlements as well as a failure to plan for safe and accessible infrastructures such as latrines and drinking water supplies also results in increased levels of gender-based violence against women and girls. Other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, such as domestic violence, forced marriage and human trafficking are also more likely to occur during and following disasters.

6. The vulnerability of women and girls to risks and hazards linked to climate change-related disasters is socially and culturally constructed and can, therefore, be changed. The categorization of women as a passive ‘vulnerable group’ in need of protection from the impact of disasters fails to consider or promote the important contributions to disaster risk reduction, post-disaster management and climate resilience already being made by diverse groups of women.<sup>9</sup> Well-designed disaster risk reduction and climate resilience initiatives that include full and effective participation by women provide an opportunity to advance substantive gender equality, while ensuring that sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and climate change objectives are achieved.<sup>10</sup>

7. In its Concluding Observations on State Party reports and in several of its earlier General Recommendations, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women has reiterated that State parties and other stakeholders have obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women to take concrete steps to address the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate through the adoption of targeted, country specific policies, strategies, legislation, budgets and other measures.<sup>11</sup> In its 44<sup>th</sup> session in 2009, the Committee stated,

<sup>7</sup> C. Bern, J.Sniezek, G.M. Mathbor, M.S. Sidiqi, C. Ronsmans, A.M.R. Chowdhury, A.E. Choudhury, K. Islam, M. Bennish, E. Noji, & R.I. Glass. 1993. “Risk Factors for Mortality in the Bangladesh Cyclone of 1991”, in *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 71(1):73-78; United Nations. 2008. “Post Nargis Joint Assessment,” July. Accessed March 2016:

[http://yangon.sites.uniconnetwork.org/files/2013/05/post-nargis\\_joint\\_assessment\\_all\\_pages.pdf](http://yangon.sites.uniconnetwork.org/files/2013/05/post-nargis_joint_assessment_all_pages.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> United Nations. 2008. “Post Nargis Joint Assessment,” July. Accessed March 2016:

[http://yangon.sites.uniconnetwork.org/files/2013/05/post-nargis\\_joint\\_assessment\\_all\\_pages.pdf](http://yangon.sites.uniconnetwork.org/files/2013/05/post-nargis_joint_assessment_all_pages.pdf);

Aguilar, L. et al, ‘Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change’, published by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA), San Jose, Costa Rica, 2009

<sup>9</sup> UN ISDR. 2015, *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: Risk and Poverty in a Changing Climate*, Geneva, Switzerland: UNISDR; Alboher, S., ‘Clean Development Mechanism: Exploring the Gender Dimensions of Climate Finance Mechanisms’, UNDP, November 2010; Alboher, S. and E. Vogt, ‘Climate Investment Fund: Exploring the Gender Dimensions of Climate Finance Mechanisms’, UNDP, November 2010; UNDP, ‘Ensuring Gender Equity in Climate Change Financing’, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Habtezion, S., ‘Gender and disaster risk reduction’, UNDP, 2013, available :

[http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/PB3-AP-](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/PB3-AP-Gender-and-disaster-risk-reduction.pdf)

<http://www.who.int/globalchange/GenderClimateChangeHealthfinal.pdf>

<http://www.who.int/globalchange/GenderClimateChangeHealthfinal.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Concluding observations on the Solomon Islands, CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, 2014, para. 40-41; Concluding

‘All stakeholders should ensure that climate change and disaster risk reduction measures are gender responsive, sensitive to indigenous knowledge systems and respect human rights. Women’s right to participate at all levels of decision-making must be guaranteed in climate change policies and programmes.’<sup>12</sup>

8. The Committee notes that other United Nations human rights mechanisms are increasingly referring to the human rights impact of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters. Among such mechanisms are the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Human Rights Council has also held several panel discussions highlighting the impact of climate change on the rights to health and food and it has adopted a number of resolutions in relation to the human rights dimensions of climate change.

## II. Objective and scope

9. This General Recommendation will provide guidance to States parties on the implementation of their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the context of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate. In their reporting to the Committee, States parties should address general obligations to ensure substantive equality between women and men in all areas of life, as well as specific guarantees in relation to those Convention rights that may be particularly affected by climate-related disasters such as extreme weather events and slow-onset phenomena including droughts and sea level rise. The objective of the Recommendation is to highlight the steps that need to be taken to achieve gender equality as a factor that will reinforce the resilience of individuals and communities in the context of climate-related disasters. The General Recommendation further seeks to improve coherence, accountability and the mutual reinforcement of different international agendas on disaster risk reduction, climate change, sustainable development and human rights, in particular women’s human rights.

10. The General Recommendation does not cover the gender-related dimensions of climate change adaptation and mitigation in general. It focuses on the obligations of States parties and other stakeholders under the Convention to take effective measures to anticipate and respond to the new hazards and disaster risks that have emerged as a result of climate change and on the need to develop synergies between gender equality, disaster risk reduction, climate management and sustainable development efforts. The general recommendation identifies three different, mutually reinforcing, areas for action by stakeholders centered on: (i) the general principles of the CEDAW Convention applicable to disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change; (ii) key measures and actions to

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observations on Peru, CEDAW/C/PER/CO/7-8, paras. 37-38; Concluding observations on Guinea, CEDAW/C/GIN/CO/7-8, para. 53; Concluding observations on Grenada, CEDAW/C/GRD/CO/1-5, paras 35-36; Concluding observations Jamaica, CEDAW/C/JAM/CO/6-7, paras. 31-32; Concluding observations on the Seychelles, 2013; Concluding observations on Togo, CEDAW/C/TGO/CO/6-7, para. 17; Concluding observations on Algeria, CEDAW/C/DZA/CO/3-4, paras 42-43; Concluding Observations, New Zealand, CEDAW/C/NLZ/CO/7, para. 9, 36-37; Concluding Observations, Chile, 2012, CEDAW/C/CHI/CO/5-6, para. 38-39; Concluding observations, Belarus, CEDAW/C/BLR/CO/7, paras 37-38, Concluding observations, Sri Lanka, CEDAW/C/LKA/CO/7, paras 38-39; Concluding observations, Nepal, CEDAW/C/NPL/CO/4-5, para. 38; Concluding observations, Tuvalu, CEDAW/C/TUV/CO/2, paras. 55-56. See also, General Recommendation no. 27 on Older Women and the Protection of their Human Rights, CEDAW/C/GC/27, 2010, para. 25.; General Recommendation no. 28 on the Core Obligations of States Parties under Article 2 of the Convention, CEDAW/C/GC/28, 2010, para. 11.

<sup>12</sup> CEDAW, 44<sup>th</sup> Session, August 2009, “Statement of the CEDAW Committee on disaster risk reduction, gender and climate change.

address gender inequality in disaster risk reduction; and (iii) specific thematic areas of concern.

### **III. The CEDAW Convention and other relevant international frameworks**

11. The human rights of women are promoted and protected by the CEDAW Convention at all stages of disaster prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and adaptation. Alongside the Convention, several specific international frameworks have been developed to cover disaster risk reduction, climate change, humanitarian assistance and sustainable development, and a number of these also address gender equality. These instruments should be read together with the provisions of the CEDAW Convention.

12. The Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) emphasizes that ‘women and their participation are critical to effectively managing disaster risk and designing, resourcing and implementing gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes; and adequate capacity building measures need to be taken to empower women for preparedness as well as build their capacity for alternate livelihood means in post-disaster situations’.<sup>13</sup>

13. In 2014, the Conference of States Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC adopted the Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG), which established a two-year programme for ‘promoting gender balance and achieving gender-responsive climate policy, developed for the purpose of guiding the effective participation of women in the bodies established under the Convention’.<sup>14</sup>

14. The Paris Agreement, adopted by the COP to the UNFCCC in 2015, notes in its preamble that ‘Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity’.<sup>15</sup>

15. The UN Sustainable Development Goals contain important targets on gender equality in Goal 5 as well as on climate change and disaster risk reduction in Goal 13.

16. The Rio Conference on the Environment and Development (1992) acknowledged the particularly vulnerable situation of small island developing states and reaffirmed the need to ensure gender equality as well as the effective participation of women and indigenous peoples’ in all initiatives related to climate change. Since that time, several other instruments that have been adopted by the UNFCCC and elsewhere that have highlighted the need to consider the impact of climate change on low lying coastal areas in all countries.

17. The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit called for gender equality, women’s empowerment and women’s rights to become pillars of humanitarian action, including in disaster preparedness and response work.

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<sup>13</sup> United Nations. 2015. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. [http://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291\\_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> UNFCCC, Decision 18.CP/20 (2014 – COP20), Lima Work Programme on Gender.

<sup>15</sup> Conference of the Parties, Adoption of the Paris Agreement, FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1.

## IV. General principles of the CEDAW Convention applicable to disaster risk reduction in a changing climate

18. Several cross-cutting principles and provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women are of primary importance for guiding legislation, policies, plans of action, programmes, budgets and other activities in relation to disaster risk reduction in a changing climate.

19. **States parties should ensure that all policies, legislation, plans, programmes, budgets and other activities related to disaster risk reduction and climate change are gender responsive and grounded in human-rights based principles including:**

(a) **Equality and non-discrimination, with priority being accorded to the most marginalized groups of women and girls, such as those from indigenous and minority groups, women and girls with disabilities, older women, women and girls living in poverty in both rural and urban settings, and migrants and refugees.**

(b) **Participation and empowerment, through the adoption of effective processes and the allocation of necessary resources to ensure the meaningful participation of diverse groups of women in every stage of policy development, implementation and monitoring at each level of government from the local to the national, regional and international.**

(c) **Accountability and access to justice, which require the provision of appropriate and accurate information and mechanisms to ensure that all women and girls whose rights have been affected by disasters are provided with adequate and timely remedies.**

20. These three key general principles, - equality and non-discrimination, participation and empowerment, and accountability - are fundamental to ensuring that all interventions related to disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change are implemented in accordance with the Convention.

### A. Equality and non-discrimination

21. States parties have obligations under Article 1 of the Convention to take targeted and concrete measures to guarantee equality between women and men, including the adoption of participatory and gender-sensitive policies related to disaster risk reduction strategies and programmes across every sector.<sup>16</sup> Article 2 of the Convention identifies specific core obligations of State parties to ensure substantive equality between women and men in all areas of life and to take legislative, policy-based and other measures to this effect.<sup>17</sup> The obligation to take ‘all appropriate measures’ including legislation, in all fields, to guarantee the full development and advancement of women on a basis of equality with men, is further expanded in the Convention’s Article 3.

22. Intersectional forms of discrimination based on other attributes such as age, economic status, disability, migration, sexual orientation and gender identity, indigenous or minority status, may limit access to information, political power, resources, and assets for preventing disaster or for recovering from the effects of disasters, including climate change associated impacts.

<sup>16</sup> General Recommendation no. 28 on the Core Obligations of States Parties under Article 2 of the Convention, CEDAW/C/GC/28, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> See General Recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the Core Obligations of States Parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

23. Economic inequalities between women and men related to discrimination in remuneration, the concentration of women in precarious, informal and casual employment, gendered divisions of household labour and the undervaluing of women's contributions to domestic, community and caring work all limit the capacity of women to prevent and adapt to the harms generated by disasters. With continued climate change these capacities will be further reduced.

24. The burden of caretaking and domestic work often increase for women following disasters. The destruction of food stocks, housing and infrastructures such as water and energy supplies and an absence of social protection systems and health care services all have specific consequences for women and girls in the aftermath of disasters. One result of these gendered inequalities is that women and girls frequently have less time to engage in economic activities or to access the resources, including information and education that are necessary for recovery and adaptation.<sup>18</sup>

**25. As outlined in General Recommendation no. 28, States parties have obligations to respect, protect and fulfill the principle of non-discrimination and to ensure women's equal development and advancement in all fields. To ensure substantive equality for women in the context of climate change related disaster risk reduction, States parties should take concrete, targeted and measurable steps to;**

**(a) Identify and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in disaster risk reduction and climate change policies, programmes, plans, legislation and other activities. For example, States parties should take steps to ensure that all women, including those belonging to indigenous groups, ethnic and religious minorities, women living in poverty, girls, older women, women and girls with disabilities, LGBTI women, refugee and internally displaced women, are adequately protected from intersecting forms of discrimination.**

**(b) Create effective participatory mechanisms to guarantee that the perspectives and rights of these groups of women and girls form an integral component of activities on disaster risk reduction at every level from the local to the national, regional and international. Measures must be taken to ensure that infrastructures and services are available, accessible and acceptable in terms of their quality and cultural adequacy on a basis of equality for all women.**

**(c) Uphold the right to work and rights at work, recognise and value women's contributions to caring, farming and domestic work. They should measure women's unpaid productive and care work to design policies and programmes to reduce and redistribute the burden (e.g. awareness raising programs on equal sharing of domestic work and unpaid care work, introduction of time saving measures, and inclusion of appropriate technologies and infrastructure).**

**(d) Protect and promote women's right to access training in non-traditional areas of work which would allow them to design, participate in, manage and monitor reconstruction and recovery initiatives following disasters and make them better equipped to benefit from such interventions.**

**(e) Eliminate discriminatory laws and practices, including those related to the ownership, disposal, control and inheritance of assets and resources such as property and land, as well as barriers that prohibit women from exercising full legal capacity and autonomy in areas such as sexual and reproductive rights, freedom of movement and equal access to social protection schemes.**

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<sup>18</sup> See, for example, CEDAW Concluding Observations on Belarus (2000), A/55/38, para. 339 ; See also, See, Katrien van Aelst and Nathalie Holvoet, 'Intersections of Marital Status in Accessing Climate Change Adaptation : Evidence from rural Tanzania,' *World Development* Vol. 79, pp. 40.



## B. Participation and Empowerment

26. The participation and development of leadership capacities amongst diverse groups of women at different levels of government and within local communities is essential to ensure that planning for and responses to disasters are effective and incorporate perspectives from all sections of society.

27. Women make significant contributions to national, local and household economies and to environmental management and disaster risk reduction at different levels. For example, women often successfully reduce vulnerability factors in their communities in the face of disasters related to climate change by finding innovative means to ensure access to drinking water, food, health and education and through establishing networks with other women, thereby increasing their social capital. The local traditional knowledge held by women in agricultural regions is particularly important in this respect as these women are well positioned to observe changes in the environment and to respond to these through different adaptive practices in crop selection, planting, harvesting and storage.

28. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has noted that most local communities develop adaptation practices that could and should be identified and followed in order to tailor effective preventive and responsive strategies related to climate change and disaster risk reduction.<sup>19</sup> This assertion is in line with the many provisions in the CEDAW Convention, including Articles 7 and 8 that call upon States parties to ensure that women are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in development planning and in political decision-making.

29. Articles 7 and 8 of the CEDAW Convention provide that women should have equality in political and public life at all levels from the local to the national and international and Article 14 reiterates that women have the right to participate in development planning and agricultural reform activities. This guarantee of political equality covers women's leadership, representation, and participation, which are essential in the development and implementation of effective risk reduction programs and policies that take into account the different needs of the population. These articles support actions to promote women's leadership and participation in planning and program design for gender equality in sectors that reduce risk (e.g., agriculture, urban planning, economics, government, health, education, and environmental resource management), disaster preparedness, training, relief coordination, recovery resources, and ensure equal access to disaster preparedness resources and opportunities.

**30. In order to ensure that women are provided with equal opportunities to participate in disaster risk reduction and climate resilience activities at all levels, the Committee recommends States parties,**

**(a) Adopt targeted temporary special measures as provided for in Article 4 of the Convention as one element of a coordinated and continuously monitored strategy to achieve the equal participation of women in all sectors related to disaster risk reduction.<sup>20</sup>**

**(b) Develop programmes to ensure participation by different groups of women in political life at various levels, particularly in the context of local and community planning and disaster preparedness.**

<sup>19</sup> IPCC Core Writing Team, R.K. Pachauri, A. Reisinger (Eds.), Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, Geneva (2007)

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Concluding observations, Tuvalu, CEDAW/C/TUV/CO/2, paras. 55-56.

(c) **Promote the equal representation of women in disaster risk reduction fora at the national, local and community level to enable them to influence disaster risk reduction policy and implementation.**

(d) **Strengthen national gender machineries, institutions, civil society and women's groups and provide them with adequate resources, skills, and authority to lead, advise, monitor and carry out strategies to reduce disaster risks stemming from gender inequality.**

(e) **Allocate adequate resources to building womens' leadership capacities and create an enabling environment to strengthen their active and substantive role in disaster risk reduction at all levels and across all relevant sectors.**

### **C. Accountability and access to justice**

31. Article 15 of the CEDAW Convention guarantees women equality before the law, which is extremely important in situations of disasters in a changing climate, particularly when women, who often face barriers to accessing justice, wish to claim reparations to cover their losses and to enable them to recover and adapt to change. The recognition of an equal legal capacity with men and equality in access to justice are essential elements in disaster mitigation and recovery policies and strategies.<sup>21</sup>

32. **States parties should ensure that legal frameworks are non-discriminatory and guarantee access to justice for all women, in line with General Recommendation no. 33 (2015), including by:**

(a) **Conducting a gender impact analysis of current laws, including those that are applied in plural legal systems, to assess their effect on women as relates to disaster risk;**

(b) **Increasing women's awareness of dispute resolution mechanisms and their legal literacy by providing them with information on their legal rights;**

(c) **Ensuring free or affordable access to legal services, legal documents including birth certificates and land title documents and legal aid;**

(d) **Dismantling barriers to women's access to justice by ensuring that formal and informal justice mechanisms and dispute resolution alternatives are available and accessible to them.**

## **V. Key Convention provisions that address disaster risk reduction in a changing climate**

### **A. Assessment and data collection**

33. The gender dimensions of disaster risk reduction and the impacts of climate change are not well understood. Limited technical capacity at the national and local level has resulted in a lack of sex and age disaggregated data (SADD) and this continues to impede the development of appropriate and targeted responses to disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change. Participatory gender impact assessments should be systematically carried out to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the types of risks faced by different women. This information should then be used as the basis for the development of appropriate strategies, policies and programmes.

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<sup>21</sup> See also CEDAW General Recommendation no. 33 on Women's Access to Justice.

34. **State parties should,**

(a) **Establish national and local mechanisms for collecting, managing, analyzing and applying sex, age and regionally disaggregated data (SADD) to inform national and regional disaster risk reduction policies, programmes, legislation and budgets.**

(b) **Develop disaggregated and gender-responsive indicators and monitoring mechanisms to enable State parties to establish baselines and measure progress in areas such as, disaster-related mortality amongst different age groups, gender related disaster risk reduction and women's participation in climate resilience and disaster risk initiatives as well as in political, economic and social institutions. Integration and coordination with other existing frameworks such as the UNFCCC, the SDGs and the Sendai Framework is important to ensure a consistent and effective approach.**

(c) **Empower, capacitate and resource the national institutions responsible for collecting, consolidating and analysing SADD including coordination with other relevant sectors, such as economic planning, SDG planning and monitoring, and local governments.**

(d) **Incorporate climate information into disaster planning and decision making at local, regional and national levels by ensuring that women are consulted as a valuable source of community knowledge on changing climatic and biological phenomena, which can inform and be a catalyst for future policy-making and planning.**

## **B. Policy coherence**

35. It is only very recently that concerted efforts have been made to coordinate policies on gender equality, climate change, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development. Some policy documents, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, attempt to integrate these various objectives into their frameworks, however, much remains to be done at the international, regional and national levels to align different policies to ensure their effectiveness in practice. Programmes of action, budgets and strategies need to be coordinated both across sectors – trade, development, energy, agriculture, education, health, planning - and at different levels of government – local and sub-national, national, regional and international – in order to ensure an effective and human rights-based approach to disaster risk reduction.

36. **State parties should,**

(a) **Improve coordination between different sectors involved in disaster preparedness, climate change, gender equality, health care, education, social protection, agriculture, environmental protection, urban planning etc.**

(b) **Undertake gender and human rights impact assessments during the design, implementation and monitoring phases of disaster risk reduction plans and policies.**

(c) **Promote and strengthen the vital role played by sub-national government in disaster preparedness, service provision and response.**

(d) **Allocate adequate budgets and monitor implementation of policies and legislation at the sub-national level.**

(e) **Engage in a comprehensive gender audit of policies and programmes across different sectorial areas including trade and investment, environment and planning, food, agriculture, social protection and employment in order to identify any**

areas of inconsistency with a view to reinforcing efforts aimed at disaster risk reduction and climate resilience.

### **C. Resources and Cooperation**

37. Inadequate resources are currently allocated both to addressing the underlying structural causes of gender inequality that increase women's exposure to the harmful impact of disaster risks and to gender-sensitive programmes specifically targeted at climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Low income climate vulnerable countries face particular challenges in developing, implementing and monitoring gender responsive disaster risk and climate change policies and programmes due to the limited availability of national public finance and development assistance. An adequate and effective allocation of resources for gender-responsive prevention, preparedness and recovery must be ensured.

38. **State parties should,**

(a) **Increase dedicated budget allocations at the national and local levels to respond to gender specific prevention, preparedness and recovery needs in productive, social infrastructure and services sectors;**

(b) **Invest in women's adaptability by identifying and supporting livelihoods that are resilient to disaster and climate change, sustainable and empowering, along with gender-responsive services that enable diverse groups of women to access and benefit from these livelihoods;**

(c) **Increase women's access to appropriate risk reduction schemes, such as social protection, livelihood diversification and insurance programmes;**

(d) **Integrate gender dimensions within relevant national, sectorial and local programs and projects, including those financed with international climate and sustainable development funds;**

(e) **Ensure that States, international organisations and other entities that provide technical and financial resources for disaster risk reduction, sustainable development and climate change incorporate a gender and women's rights perspective into the design, implementation and monitoring of all of their programmes.**

### **D. Business Actors and Extra-Territorial Obligations**

39. The private sector can play an important role in disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and the promotion of gender equality both at the national level and also when operating transnationally. The development of public-private partnerships is being promoted through a number of different mechanisms, including within the Sustainable Development Agenda. These partnerships may provide necessary financial and technical resources to enable the creation of new infrastructures for disaster risk reduction as well as climate resilient livelihoods. To ensure that private sector initiatives in the field of disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation promote and protect women's human rights, they must be participatory, gender-responsive and subjected to continuous human rights-based monitoring and evaluation.

40. **In relation to business actors at the national level, States parties should,**

(a) **Create conducive environments for gender responsive private sector investment in disaster risk reduction, preparedness and recovery including through sustainable urban and rural development and social insurance schemes etc.**

(b) **Encourage women's entrepreneurship and create incentives for women to engage in businesses involved in sustainable development and climate resilient**

livelihood activities in areas such as the clean energy sector and agro-ecological food systems.

(c) **Conduct gender impact analyses of any proposed public-private partnerships in the areas of disaster risk reduction and climate resilience and ensure that different groups of women are involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of private sector partnerships. Particular attention should be paid to guaranteeing that all groups of women have physical and economic access to any infrastructures and services provided through public-private partnerships.**

41. States parties should regulate the activities of non-State actors within their jurisdiction, including when they operate extraterritorially. General recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 reaffirms the requirement under article 2 (e) to eliminate discrimination by any public or private actor, which extends to acts of national corporations operating extraterritorially.

42. **In connection with extraterritorial obligations States parties should,**

(a) **Take immediate steps to manage water and other shared natural resources and to limit the impact of carbon emissions and transboundary pollution by, *inter alia*: adopting regulatory measures to prevent any actor under their jurisdiction, including individuals, companies and public entities, from infringing or abusing the rights of women and girls outside their territory;**

(b) **Make appropriate and effective remedies available to affected women when a State party or non-State actor under its jurisdiction has violated its extraterritorial obligations.**

## **E. Capacity Development and access to technology**

### *Capacity Development*

41. The lack of women's active participation in disaster risk reduction, particularly at the local level, impedes progress towards the implementation of gender equality commitments and the development of coordinated and effective disaster risk reduction and climate resilience policies, programmes and strategies. Measures should be taken to build the capacities and capabilities of women, women's organizations and state entities, including women's machineries, to participate in gender-sensitive disaster risk assessments at the local, national, regional and international levels.

42. **States parties should,**

(a) **Ensure that early warning and action systems are gender responsive;**

(b) **Increase women's engagement in the development of local disaster preparedness plans by supporting their technical capacities and providing adequate resources for this purpose;**

(c) **Ensure that women have equal access to local infrastructures and services to enable their recovery from disasters;**

(d) **Increase inclusive and accessible education and awareness raising among men and women, girls and boys on gender roles, rights, and capacities in relation to disaster risk reduction and climate resilience;**

(e) **Institutionalise the leadership of diverse groups of women in disaster preparedness (including the development and dissemination of early warning systems) response, recovery and reconstruction at all levels.**

*Access to technology*

43. As the CEDAW Committee noted in its 2009 Statement on Climate Change, ‘Policies that support gender equality in access, use and control of science and technology and formal and informal education and training will enhance a nation’s capability in the areas of disaster reduction, mitigation and adaptation to climate change.’<sup>22</sup> Too often, however, women have been unable to access life-saving technologies due to gender-based inequalities.

44. **State parties should:**

**(a) Ensure that early warning information is provided using technologies that are timely, culturally appropriate, and take into account the needs of diverse groups of women. In particular, the extension of Internet and mobile telephone coverage and the accessibility of these services for all women, including those from indigenous and minority groups and women with disabilities, should be actively promoted within the context of disaster risk reduction programmes.**

**(b) Ensure that women have equal access to technology for preventing and mitigating damage to crops, livestock, homes and businesses, and have access to, and economically benefit from climate change adaptation and mitigation technologies;**

**(c) Promote understanding, application, and use of the traditional knowledge and skills that women hold in disaster preparedness and response as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation,**

**(d) Promote and facilitate women’s contributions to disaster risk reduction and climate science and technology.**

## **VI. Thematic areas of concern**

### **A. Health**

45. Article 12 of the CEDAW Convention specifically calls on States parties to guarantee equality between women and men in the provision of health care services, including reproductive and sexual health and mental and psychological health.<sup>23</sup> The measures that States parties must take under the Convention in order to respect, protect and fulfill the right to health for all women are summarized in the Committee’s General Recommendation no. 24 (1999) on women and health. These measures are equally applicable to situations of disaster management planning and as part of policies to mitigate the impact of climate change.<sup>24</sup>

**46.** States parties should ensure that detailed guidelines and budget allocations are made to promote and protect women’s right to health, including sexual and reproductive health, mental and psychological health, hygiene and sanitation, and that provisions for pre and post-natal care, are included in strategies, plans and programmes for disaster risk reduction and response.

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<sup>22</sup> Statement of the CEDAW Committee on Gender and Climate Change, CEDAW 44th Session, August 2009.

<sup>23</sup> See, General Recommendation no. 24 (1999), Article 12 of the Convention (women and health).

<sup>24</sup> WHO (2008) “Gender inequities in environmental health”. 25th Session of the European Environment and Health Committee. (EUR/5067874/151)

47. In particular, States parties should,

(a) Involve women and girls in the planning, implementation and monitoring of health policies and programmes and in the design of integrated health services for women in the context of disaster management and response.

(b) Invest in health systems and services and allocate essential resources to the underlying determinants of health such as clean water, adequate nutrition and sanitation facilities.

(c) Ensure the removal of all barriers to women and girl's access to health services, education and information, including in the areas of mental and psychological health, sexual and reproductive health, and, in particular, allocate resources for programmes directed at mental health and counseling as well as the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

(d) Prioritize the provision of family planning and reproductive health care services including access to emergency contraception and safe abortion and reduce maternal mortality rates through safe motherhood services and prenatal assistance;

(e) Monitor the provision of health services to women by public, non-governmental and private organizations, to ensure equal access and quality of care;

(f) Require that all health services act to promote the human rights of women, including the rights to autonomy, privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, non-discrimination and choice;

(g) Ensure that training curricula for health workers, including front line service providers, and emergency workers includes comprehensive, mandatory, gender-sensitive courses on women's health and human rights, in particular gender-based violence, and that health practitioners are aware of the linkages between climate change, increased disaster risk and the growing potential for public health emergencies as a result of shifting disease patterns.

(h) Gender-based differences in vulnerability to infectious and non-infectious diseases occurring in situations of disaster and as a result of climate change should be identified and steps taken to develop timely and rights-based prevention, response and monitoring strategies.

## B. Adequate standard of living

### *Food, water and sanitation*

48. The impacts of climate change-related disasters are already being experienced in many areas in connection with decreased food security and more limited availability of water and other natural resources. There is evidence that the effects of food and water insecurity are not gender neutral and that it is women who are more likely to suffer from undernourishment and malnutrition in times of disaster and food scarcity.<sup>25</sup> It has also been shown that women, who have the primary responsibility for preparing food and collecting fuel and water in many societies, are disproportionately impacted by a lack of available and accessible water and fuel sources due to the additional burdens in terms of time, physical hardship, increased exposure to violence and stress that this climate-related resource scarcity may entail.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, CEDAW Concluding Observations on Nepal, CEDAW/C/NPL/CO/4-5.

<sup>26</sup> WHO, Gender, Climate Change and Health, 2010, available : <http://www.who.int/globalchange/GenderClimateChangeHealthfinal.pdf>

49. Women are directly affected by climate change and related disasters as food producers and as agricultural labourers due to the fact that they make up the majority of the world's small-holder and subsistence farmers and a significant proportion of farm workers. As a result of discriminatory laws and social norms, women have less access to secure land tenure and their farmlands tend to be of inferior quality and more prone to flooding or other climate-related events. Women are also indirectly affected by the impacts climate-related events have on the price of foodstuffs.

50. Articles 12 and 14 of the CEDAW Convention – on health and on rural women – contain specific guarantees on nutrition and women's equal participation in decision-making about food production and consumption. In addition, the core obligations of States as outlined in Article 2 of the CEDAW Convention, equality before the law guaranteed in Article 15 and the specific issue of equality within marriage and family relations in Article 16 are of central importance in addressing women's equal access to land and productive resources that are vital for ensuring food security.

51. **State parties should,**

(a) **Promote women's equal rights to food, land and natural resources, including water, and ensure that they have effective access to these, even during times of scarcity;**

(b) **Increase women's resilience to disaster and climate change impacts by identifying and supporting livelihoods that are sustainable, empowering, and develop gender-responsive services that enable diverse groups of women to access and benefit from these livelihoods;**

(c) **Invest in public and private infrastructure and services, such as water and sanitation systems, that meet the needs of diverse groups of women, do not expose them to further risk and are resilient to potential hazards.**

### **C. Education and information**

52. Article 10 of the CEDAW Convention concerns the elimination of discrimination in education.<sup>27</sup> Education improves the capacity of women to participate within their households, families, communities, and businesses to identify means to reduce risk and to develop more effective recovery strategies, thus building more resilient communities. Education also increases access to opportunities, resources, technologies and information that aid in disaster risk reduction.<sup>28</sup> The prevention and mitigation of disaster and climate risks require well-trained women and men in multiple disciplines including economics, agriculture, water resources management, climatology, engineering, law, telecommunications and emergency services.<sup>29</sup>

53. In the aftermath of disasters, girls and women, whose access to education is often already limited as a result of social, cultural and economic barriers, may face even greater obstacles to participation in education due to the destruction of infrastructures, a lack of teachers and other resources, economic hardship and security concerns.

54. **In accordance with the Committee's General Recommendation no. 37 on the right to education, States parties should,**

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<sup>27</sup> See the forthcoming General Recommendation on Women's Right to Education.

<sup>28</sup> Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change. Rep. IUCN, UNDP, Global Gender and Climate Alliance. Web.

<sup>29</sup> UNISDR Background Paper 'Issues of Vulnerability with Specific Reference to Gender in the Asia-Pacific: Post - 2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction Consultations'.



(a) **Take steps to ensure that women and girls have equal access to educational and training opportunities, both formal and informal, at all levels.**

(b) **Ensure women and men have equal access to information and education regarding the changing climate and understand the associated risks and impacts, in particular with regard to climate-related hazards.**

(c) **Put specific programmes in place to encourage and support girls and women to undertake education and training in areas related to disaster risk reduction and management as well as environmental and climate science.**

(d) **Allocate adequate resources and budgets to ensure that schools and other educational facilities are reconstructed and rendered operational as quickly as possible following disasters and prioritise the reintegration of girls and other groups for whom education has not traditionally been valued. To this end, specific outreach programmes should be designed with a view to ensuring that girls and women are not excluded from education in the wake of disasters.**

(e) **Prioritise innovative and flexible educational programmes to enable women to develop the skills required to adapt to the changing climate and engage in sustainable development initiatives.**

#### **D. Social protection**

55. Climate-related hazards affect women living in poverty directly through impacts on their livelihoods, such as losses in crop yields, the destruction of housing, food insecurity, and loss of sense of place. Social and legal inequalities further restrict the ability of women to move to safer, less disaster-prone areas and may limit women's rights to acquire credit, social security benefits, and secure tenure over land and other productive resources.<sup>30</sup> These factors are all addressed in the CEDAW Convention, in particular in the definition of discrimination in Article 1, the core obligations of States parties in Article 2, in Article 5 in obligations to identify and modify social and cultural patterns of conduct grounded in gender-based stereotypes, in Article 13 on duties to take measures to eliminate discrimination in economic and social life and in the provisions of Article 16 on equality in marriage and family relations.

56. Economically marginalized segments of the population, women living in poverty in particular, face gender-related, social and economic obstacles that limit their resilience to disasters in a changing climate. For example, women, who make up the majority of the world's agricultural and informal-sector workers, are often excluded from social protection and insurance schemes.<sup>31</sup> As a result, many women face specific barriers to accessing necessary resources to enable them to adapt to or recover from disasters (e.g. they do not have vehicles for evacuation or machinery such as pumps to limit damage to crops and other assets; may have no alternative shelter; may not have insurance; may not have access to formal employment or credit for aid in recovery). Articles 3 and 13 of the CEDAW Convention contain obligations for States parties to ensure that women have equal rights in economic and social relations, including access to social security and financial services.

57. **State parties should,**

(a) **Invest in gender-sensitive social protection systems and social services that reduce economic inequalities between women and men and enable women to**

<sup>30</sup> See CEDAW General Recommendation no. 29 (2013), Economic Consequences of Marriage, Family Relations and their Dissolution and the forthcoming General Recommendation on rural women.

<sup>31</sup> Statement of the CEDAW Committee on Gender and Climate Change, CEDAW 44th Session, August 2009.

mitigate disaster risks and adapt to climate change. Relief payments and social security entitlements should not be only paid to the male household head and eligibility criteria for social protection schemes should be closely monitored to ensure that they are accessible for different groups of women.

(b) Promote women's access to economic resources including decent and sustainable employment opportunities to facilitate recovery, adaptation and resilience.

(c) Facilitate equal access to markets, credit and insurance schemes, and regulate the informal economy to ensure that women are able to claim pensions and other employment-related social security entitlements.

## **E. Sustainable Urban Development**

58. Large urban areas and megacities, particularly those in low income countries located in coastal areas, are increasingly being exposed to climate change-related risks. This exposure has widespread negative impacts on health, livelihoods, and assets with urban women, especially in the low-income countries, being disproportionately affected. Women and girls often find it difficult to access essential services in urban areas due to lack of information, unsafe public transportation, or increased restrictions on their movement resulting from emergencies. Gender-based violence, including trafficking of women and girls in urban areas, increase in such situations.

59. Climate and disaster driven migration from rural regions to urban centers, often results in migrants settling in poor, climate vulnerable and under-served areas of cities. Overcrowding, inadequate housing, increased exposure to infectious diseases, insecurity and gender-based violence may result. Internal migration can weaken and destroy social support networks upon which women are dependent. Human rights-based sustainable urban planning is an essential component of disaster risk reduction.

60. **The Committee recommends that States parties,**

(a) **Develop participatory, gender responsive, sustainable urban development plans and policies that integrate a human rights based approach in order to guarantee access to adequate housing, water and sanitation, food, employment, education and health care. Priority should be given to ensuring the accessibility of services for all women.**

(b) **Adopt programmes, policies and allocate budgets to eliminate homelessness and to ensure housing is available and adequate in that it respects the right of women to live with dignity and in safety. Measures must be taken to protect women against forced eviction and to ensure that public housing and rental assistance schemes prioritise and respond to the specific needs of women.**

(c) **Women must be active participants in planning, implementing and monitoring housing and urban development programmes and policies, including in times of emergency.**

## **F. Rural Settings**

61. Rural areas, due to their dependence on agriculture and natural resources, as well as pre-existing poverty and inequality in access to services and infrastructure, are highly vulnerable to extreme events. This vulnerability is further exacerbated in the context of climate change.

62. The knowledge of local environmental conditions and farming techniques that women in rural areas possess may strengthen the capacity of rural communities to develop

their resilience to disasters in a changing climate. This is particularly important with respect to the traditional knowledge on disaster risk reduction held by indigenous women.<sup>32</sup> This knowledge has not, so far, been adequately valued or incorporated within policy-making on climate change and disaster risk reduction.

63. Article 14 of the CEDAW Convention identifies the specific needs of rural women who frequently face barriers in equal access to land, financial resources, education, technology, health care and participation in development and decision-making.<sup>33</sup> Situations of climate-related disaster make these barriers even more important and women in rural areas should be a priority in policy-making and strategies to prevent, mitigate and monitor the impact of disasters in a changing climate.<sup>34</sup>

**64. In accordance with General Recommendation no. 34 on the rights of rural women, States parties should,**

**(a) Address specific threats posed to rural women by climate change and related disasters. They should alleviate and mitigate those threats and ensure that rural women enjoy a safe, clean and healthy environment.**

**(b) Effectively address the impact of climate change-related risks on rural women in the planning and implementation of all policies concerning the environment, climate change, disaster risk reduction, preparedness and management and ensure the full participation of rural women in designing, planning and implementing such policies.**

**(c) Ensure the participation of rural women and girls in all phases of disaster relief and climate resilience programming from early warning to relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Gender impact assessments should be conducted prior to and during the implementation of these programmes with the results being used to guide policy-making and service provision.**

## **G. Marriage and family life**

65. Article 16 of the CEDAW Convention defines the principle of equal rights in marriage and family relations, and details various important elements of equality within marriage and the family. These include the right to enter marriage only with free and full consent, and equal rights to acquisition, management, ownership, inheritance, and transfer of property. These rights become particularly important in disasters, when political and economic disruption, generalized violence and poverty may motivate parents to marry off their daughters, or where surviving widows or partners of civil partnerships or de facto unions (where recognized) may not have legal rights to property, which results in increased inequality and a reduced ability to recover and develop climate resilient livelihoods.

**66. States should, in accordance with the Committee's General Recommendation no. 21 on equality in marriage and family relations and General Recommendation no. 29 on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution,**

**(a) Take appropriate steps to ensure equality between men and women in all areas of family life including the ownership, control and inheritance of property and other resources. To this end, efforts must be made to ensure that all personal status**

<sup>32</sup> See, UNFCCC, 2014, Report on the meeting on available tools for the use of indigenous and traditional knowledge and practices for adaptation, needs of local and indigenous communities and the application of gender-sensitive approaches and tools for adaptation, FCCC/SBST A/2014/INF.11.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Concluding observations on Peru, CEDAW/C/PER/CO/7-8, paras. 37-38.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Concluding observations on Peru, CEDAW/C/PER/CO/7-8, paras. 37-38; Concluding observations on Grenada, CEDAW/C/GRD/CO/1-5, paras 35-36.

laws reflect the fundamental principle of equality between women and men and that they are fully harmonized with the Convention.

(b) **Ensure that there is a minimum legal age for marriage and that this age is equal for men and women. States should include training on the prevalence of child and forced marriage for all personnel involved in disaster response activities. In partnership with women's associations and other stakeholders, mechanisms should be established within local and regional disaster management plans to prevent, monitor and address the issue of child and forced marriage.**

## **H. Gender-based violence against women**

67. Prior experiences from disaster response and recovery reveal that domestic and other forms of violence against women, girls and transgender persons increases significantly in situations of disaster.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the societal dysfunction and economic disruption resulting from disasters enable human trafficking and sexual exploitation, especially within areas where there is housing, food and resource insecurity.

68. Article 6 of the CEDAW Convention provides that States must take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of trafficking in women. In its General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, the Committee notes 'traditional attitudes by which women are regarded as subordinate to men or as having stereotyped roles perpetuate widespread practices involving violence or coercion'.

69. The CEDAW Committee has also observed on different occasions that 'sexual violence is common in humanitarian crises and may become acute in the wake of a national disaster. In a time of heightened stress, lawlessness and homelessness, women face an increased threat of violence'.<sup>36</sup>

70. **In accordance with the Convention and General Recommendation no. 19, States parties should,**

(a) **Promote women's leadership in developing policies and programmes to address existing and new risk factors for gender-based violence against women – including domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking and forced marriage - within the context of disaster risk reduction and climate resilience planning.**

(b) **Provide accessible spaces for all women wishing to report gender-based violence, and ensure that appropriate information on different forms of violence that are prevalent within situations of disaster are provided. Support women who want to report gender-based violence and guarantee that their right to confidential, effective and rights-based processes for accessing justice is upheld.**

(c) **Develop, in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders including women's associations, a system of regular monitoring and evaluation of different interventions designed to prevent and respond to gender-based violence against women within disaster management and risk reduction programmes.**

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<sup>35</sup> WHO (2008) "Gender inequities in environmental health". 25th Session of the European Environment and Health Committee. (EUR/5067874/151) [http://www.euro.who.int/Document/EEHC/25th\\_EEHC\\_Milan\\_edoc15.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/Document/EEHC/25th_EEHC_Milan_edoc15.pdf). See also The High-Level Dialogue on mobilizing women's leadership at the 2015 World Conference on Disaster Reduction which also highlighted the importance of planning to prevent violence and trafficking, <http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/Dialogue-1-co-Chairs-Summary1.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> Statement by the CEDAW Committee on the situation in Haiti, E/CN.6/2010/CRP.2; See also, See also, CEDAW/C/GC/19/Add.1, para. 12.

**(d) Adopt long-term policies and strategies to address the root causes of gender-based violence against women in disaster situations, including by engaging with men and boys, the media, traditional and religious leaders and educational institutions to identify and eliminate social and cultural stereotypes concerning the status of women.**

## **I. Migration and forced displacement**

65. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and environmental degradation resulting from climate change are likely to lead to significant population displacement.<sup>37</sup> In many contexts, however, women are unable to leave regions at high risk of disaster or to migrate in order to re-establish their lives in the wake of extreme climatic events.<sup>38</sup> Gender-based stereotypes, discriminatory laws, lack of economic resources and limited access to social capital frequently restrict the ability of women to migrate. Women who do migrate may also be vulnerable to climate change impacts in destination areas, particularly in urban centers in developing countries.

66. CEDAW and many other international human rights bodies, including the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families (CMW), have recognized that climate change and disasters are some of the factors that drive women's migration.<sup>39</sup> In several regions, climate change and associated disasters are contributing to an increase in the feminization of migration – i.e. the migration of women on their own, into feminized sectors of work, for the purposes of supporting family members who no longer have local livelihood opportunities.<sup>40</sup>

67. Women migrants face heightened risk of gender-based violence and other forms of discrimination in transit, in camps, at borders and in destination countries.<sup>41</sup> Women may also face specific human rights violations during migration and at their destination due to a lack of adequate sexual, reproductive and mental health care as well as discrimination in access to employment, social security, education, housing and justice. Migrant women and girls are frequently subjects of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, based on their sex and on additional grounds, including their migration status.

**68. In accordance with the Convention and General Recommendations no. 26 on women migrant workers, and no. 32 on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, State parties should,**

**(a) Ensure that migration and development policies are gender-responsive and take into account the different risk factors and human rights violations that may be experienced by specific groups of women.**

<sup>37</sup> Joint Statement by CMW, CEDAW, UN Women and OHCHR, 'Addressing Gender Dimensions in Large-Scale Movements of Migrants and Refugees', 19 September 2016, available : <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20521&LangID=E>

<sup>38</sup> Asian Development Bank, *Gender equality and food security—women's empowerment as a tool against hunger*, Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2013, p. 12.

<sup>39</sup> See CEDAW General Recommendation no. 26 (2009), on women migrant workers, para 8; Joint Statement by CMW, CEDAW, UN Women and OHCHR, 'Addressing Gender Dimensions in Large-Scale Movements of Migrants and Refugees', 19 September 2016, available : <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20521&LangID=E>.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.

<sup>41</sup> United Nations Gender Assembly. (2016). In safety and dignity: addressing large movements of refugees and migrants: Report of the Secretary General p.9, available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/112/62/PDF/N1611262.pdf?OpenElement> [access 18 July 2016].

(b) Facilitate the participation of women migrants in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies designed to protect and promote their human rights at all phases of migration. Particular efforts must be taken to involve different groups of migrant women in designing appropriate services in areas including; mental health and psycho-social support, sexual and reproductive health, education and training, employment, housing, and access to justice.

(c) Collect sex disaggregated data on the movement of people and analyse this to identify gender and climate-specific push factors.

(d) Integrate human mobility-related considerations into disaster risk reduction policies, taking into account the specific role and needs of women and girls before, during and after disasters.

## VII. Dissemination and reporting

69. In order to effectively reduce the risk of disasters within a changing climate, States and other stakeholders should take measurable and targeted steps to improve coordination between the various sectors involved in disaster risk reduction, climate resilience, sustainable development and gender equality. A key component of this strategy should be the collection, analysis and dissemination of information and data concerning the development of strategies, policies and programmes designed to address gender inequalities, reduce disaster risk and increase climate resilience.

70. Cooperative networks between civil society organizations working on gender equality, humanitarian assistance and climate change should be established and national human rights institutions, government agencies at various levels and international organisations should be included within these.

**71. To ensure that effective monitoring and reporting systems are established, State parties should,**

(a) **Design and institutionalize reliable mechanisms to collect, analyse and monitor SADD across all areas relevant to disaster risk reduction, climate change resilience and gender equality.**

(b) **Ensure the participation of women at the national and local levels in data collection, analysis, monitoring and dissemination of findings.**

(c) **Regularly report on the legal frameworks, strategies, policies, budgets and programmes that they have implemented to ensure the human rights of women are promoted and protected within disaster risk reduction and climate resilience interventions.**

72. **The Committee encourages States parties to translate the present general recommendation into national and local languages, including indigenous and minority languages, and to disseminate it widely to all branches of government, civil society, the media, academic institutions and women's organizations.**

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