



## Pakistan Statement on Gender Equality and Gender Based Violence towards the World Humanitarian Summit 2016

### Rationale for this statement

In October 2015 UN Women, CARE International in Pakistan and the Gender Equality and Governance Group brought together National and International Organizations to discuss the rights and concerns of women and girls in times of disaster and implications of this for the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS).

This paper summarises key recommendations emerging from that event and a follow-up process to a range of stakeholders that play important roles in the response to natural and man-made disasters in Pakistan in the context of wider deliberations towards the WHS. As such, these recommendations have relevance for both national stakeholders, including government authorities, relevant line ministries, the national military, civil society organisations, the private sector, and international stakeholders, including international humanitarian agencies and women organizations. As those stakeholders consider the commitments they might make towards the World Humanitarian Summit, as well as reflect on implications of the Summit process for national policy and practice, these recommendations reflect key priorities to be considered in terms of the gender perspective at district, provincial and national levels.

**Background: A gender perspective on natural and man-made disasters in Pakistan**

Pakistan has a long history of experience with both natural and human-made disasters. Pakistan has also made important contributions to wider global efforts to respond to humanitarian crises in other contexts, including through its contribution to United Nations peace operations globally and through hosting refugees. While the scale of some of these disasters has been vast and attracted international attention, others have happened on a smaller-scale but been just as serious for the affected individuals, families and communities as well as for the relevant local institutions seeking to support the emergency response and recovery efforts.

In this context, there are different specific impacts of natural and human-made disasters on men and women, boys and girls which in part reflect gender dynamics. Humanitarian crisis bring along an increased level of vulnerability among women, young girls and children due to their subordinate position at the familial and societal levels arising out of socially and culturally embedded values. Women and girls face specific vulnerabilities due to pre-existing gender inequality, unequal work burden due to them having both productive as well as reproductive responsibilities, lack of control over resources, restricted mobility, limited facilities for education and lack of employment and food insecurity.

Reports also indicate that women and children face specific issues in terms of sexual and gender-based violence in times of crisis. For example a study in 2008 in four Afghan refugee camps (Koga, Barakai-I, Barakai-II, and Mera Kachawri) revealed that more than 50% of women reported having experienced physical or emotional violence, and 60% of men reported abusing their wives in some form. Natural disasters (both in cases of earthquakes and floods) have also been associated with increases in SGBV; including *forced sex, increased risk of unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, sexual abuse and harassment, kidnapping, trafficking and forced marriages*.<sup>1</sup>

**National and international responses to the gender dimensions of disasters in Pakistan to date**

As we look towards the World Humanitarian Summit, we are not starting from zero. Important steps have been taken by both national and international institutions to address the impacts of natural and man-made disasters on women and girls in Pakistan. Key steps include the adoption of the National Policy Guidelines on Vulnerable Groups in Disasters of 2014 and the creation of the 'Gender and Child Cell' at the National Disaster Management Authority. At the provincial level, there have also been steps to establish gender focal point capacities. Efforts on gender and addressing the specific needs of women and girls can also find support from wider efforts to promote community-based disaster risk management (eg the NDRM Roadmap and its Guidelines for CBDRM which identify women as a priority vulnerable group alongside children, disabled and the elderly). Good practices on addressing the specific rights and needs of women and girls in disasters can also be brought from other contexts to inform future efforts in Pakistan as well as at the global level; for example through facilitating south-south exchanges and regional strategies (eg SAARC on human trafficking; or Pakistani military involvement in UN peace operations' and best practices identified on SGBV in that context).

In light of these trends in Pakistan and the wider deliberations on the specific needs and rights of women and girls in times of crisis towards the World Humanitarian Summit in 2015, the following recommendations are made:

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<sup>1</sup> [http://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/AFC-Vol.17-No.2-2011\\_Gender-based-Violence-and-Health-Sector.pdf](http://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/AFC-Vol.17-No.2-2011_Gender-based-Violence-and-Health-Sector.pdf)

- Women’s inclusion at all stages of the DRR and disaster response chain should be strengthened, including particular attention to:
  - At the policy level, women have important contributions to make to strengthen wider disaster risk reduction and preparedness, as well as to ensure an effective integration of gender sensitivity into these efforts. Women groups from both rural and urban areas in Pakistan should be included in the disaster management decision-making cycle. This in turn can ensure that these groups help to effectively transfer knowledge to the communities as part of a wider gender-sensitive approach to CBDRM.
  - At the sub-national and operational levels, women should particularly be recognized as ‘agents of change’ and be utilized in risk reduction, preparedness and inducted as rescue and relief workers. Different sections of the female population as well as women’s groups – including girl guides, LHVs, women headed households – cope with the impacts of crises in specific ways as well as make important, if often under-recognised, contributions to the wider efforts of communities to respond to disasters. LHVs, teachers and other skilled female workers within communities can be utilized to deliver services of relevance to disaster response in a systematic institutionalized manner.
  - The capacity of female local enumerators should be built to enable needs assessment, as well as design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of DRR and DRM programmes and strategies. Building a cadre of female enumerators will be especially important in those parts of Pakistan in which the prevailing social norms mean that male enumerators cannot interact directly with women at the local level. The NDMA’s ‘community-based disaster risk management’ guidance, and nascent PDMA roadmaps to implement this approach at the provincial level, provide entry-points for this approach to properly ground DRR and humanitarian efforts in the knowledge, understanding and expertise of women within the local community.
  - Local capacities of women and women’s organisations, as well as other actors at grassroots level, should also be supported to enable effective gender-based violence prevention and response in times of crisis. While progress has been made at a policy and institutional level on GBV in Pakistan, studies reveal that the revival of social structures in times of crisis play a vital role in overall community resilience, as well as in the provision of local community-based protection strategies (eg. Provision of safe spaces for women and girls). Towards this end, trusted community figures, such as teachers, can be trained to help facilitate such efforts to protect women, young girls and children in the context of CBDRM efforts.
  
- Building on the important and innovative work led by the ‘Gender and Child Cell’ at the NDMA, and similar gender focal point capacities developed at the provincial level by PDMA in KPK, Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh, Punjab and FATA, Government capacity and leadership to promote gender responsive DRR and humanitarian response, including the appointment of dedicated full-time gender focal points, should be strengthened at all level. In particular, gender focal persons at district level should be designated from the existing staff in relevant line departments. SOPs (for senior citizens, physically challenged, girl children, young boys) and operational plans should be developed followed by official notification to all R/PDMS, DDMA and line departments.
  
- Best practices on addressing the gender-related impacts of crises, as well as the specific needs of women and girls, should be factored into doctrine, policy, trainings and exercises, for the military on its role in natural and man-made disasters. Key issues to consider include:

- Enabling relevant institutions to support 'safe spaces' for displaced women
- Enabling access of women and girls to appropriate medical and other basic services,
- Prevention of gender-based violence (eg through role of women police and women-friendly/community-based policing models)
- Fostering better mutual understanding and streamlining processes for liaison between the military and civil society organisations involved in DRM and emergency responses, including through simplifying the 'No Objections Certificate' process. Longer-term investment in dialogue and awareness-raising between the military and civil society actors through DRR and emergency preparedness efforts can then enable smoother coordination in times of crisis.

Key entry-points for the above include the mandate given to the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), which is mandated by the NDMA to act as central training institute and research facility. Others have pointed out that trainings and exercises for the military on humanitarian issues developed by the NIDM should also involve enhanced collaboration and coordination with military training institutes like the National Defense University, Command & Staff College, School of Infantry & Tactics and other Army level school of instructions. Gender and the specific needs of women and girls should be factored systematically into these efforts. In addition, these efforts can also be informed by Pakistan's experience as a major troop-contributing country to United Nations peace operations globally and best practices identified by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the protection of civilians and sexual and gender-based violence.

- Roll-out of the NDMA vulnerability guidelines should happen through national, provincial and district DMAs, key ministries including Ministry of Human Rights, provincial directorates and Women and Social Welfare Departments in consultation with humanitarian organizations. To enable this, SOPs and a roll-out plan should be devised including a clear timeline, defining roles and responsibilities of different actors, modalities for engaging relevant stakeholders (in line with the community-based disaster risk management guidelines), a monitoring and evaluation plan, and an impact study.
- Sex and Age Disaggregated data should become standard practice for disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management by all actors, including Government line ministries at national and sub-national level, and non-governmental actors, including national and international humanitarian agencies. Data collection tools should be streamlined to ensure the coherence, comparability and credibility of findings to inform needs assessments, as well as monitoring and evaluation of crisis-related strategies and programmes. In addition, capacities should be built in all relevant institutions to complement sex- and age-disaggregated data with a holistic gender analysis so that all pre and post evaluation studies and impact assessments are carried out using a gender lens.
- Sexual and Gender Based Violence prevention and response remain a major challenge. Key elements to address include:
  - Coherence between national strategies on SGBV and DRR and DRM policies, strategies and programmes is essential. Specific steps should be taken by all relevant institutions of government to enable women to assume lead roles in overcoming the siloes between

SGBV prevention and response in general, and adapting these efforts for strategies relating to natural or man-made disasters.

- Data on SDGBV at the district level remains a particular gap. A nation-wide database should be established on gender-based violence, with particular attention to torture, harassment, kidnapping, early and forced marriages and human trafficking.
  - Standard Operational Procedures could be introduced in the following institutions police, schools, religious seminaries, mosques and churches, media, local government institutions relating to welfare of women and children in crisis situations.
  - Human trafficking has emerged as a significant concern in the context of disaster-related population displacement. To tackle this, a regional approach is required and the government of Pakistan should work with partners under SAARC to ensure more timely and effective regional prevention and response strategies (for when Pakistan is a source, route or destination in human trafficking).
- Annual Development Plans at national, provincial and district levels should ensure a percentage allocation towards DRR; and for this to be planned and monitored in accordance with good practices on gender sensitive budgeting. In particular, public sector institutions to be prioritised in this regard for systematically institutionalizing a focus on women and girls across their planning cycles are the FIA, MoHR, Social Welfare Departments, Gender Crime Cells, PPB, NDMA, R/PDMAs and DDMA.
  - Cross sector mainstreaming link to new IASC GBV Guidelines The programmatic response to SGBV also needs a close review especially by the international aid community. Response in floods 2010 is a case study in this regard. A few credible organizations in Pakistan wanted to address the issue of SGBV through whistles, solar lamps, etc., but they were refused aid by the Protection Cluster of UNOCHA with the observation that the request actually belonged to the Non-Food Items (NFIs) section instead of Protection Cluster. It was an irony that the concerned authorities were unable to see the interconnection of whistles and solar lamps with the strategy of combating SGBV in areas where families were in a constant fear of sexual aggression and harassment of women and children especially in the nights.
  - Early Warning System should be established at the district level for a coherent and inclusive approach. Vulnerabilities, especially for women and girl children, dramatically increase when disasters hit unexpectedly. Their cost can be substantially reduced through early warning systems to evacuate to safer places using disaster management knowledge and enhanced resilience through hazard maps, checking routes, re-assessing the safety of evacuation centers and sharing SOPs.
  - Strong accountability & monitoring mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that gender is incorporated at all stages of design, planning and implementation of DRR and relief and response activities. A comprehensive monitoring mechanism would require integration of gender sensitive indicators and inclusion of women in the monitoring teams to capture gender responsive implementation, or the lack thereof. It is pertinent that any gaps be translated into reforms in action plans and policy guidelines at all levels of the governance system.