



**EnGenDER**

Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery,  
Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean

# Gender Inequality of Climate Change and Disaster Risk in the Energy Sector

March 2022

Gender & Climate Change Resilience Series

6 of 18



Natural hazards and climate change impact women and men differently due to differences in societal expectations of their roles and responsibilities in families and communities, and the means by which they earn their livelihoods. Women generally have lower

incomes, less access to credit and decision-making authority, and limited control over resources, which increases their vulnerabilities to many natural hazards and climate change impacts. The impacts of climate change and disasters often magnify existing gender inequalities between women and men; thus, the approach to policy development and service delivery by institutions needs to take into consideration gendered differences. In particular, climate change and disaster risk preparation and response demand initiatives that identify and address existing gendered differences to ensure that women and girls, and men and boys have equal access to disaster risk resilience and climate change and environmental solutions.



## CLIMATE CHANGE

a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time period.



## DISASTER

a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.



## HAZARD

a process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impact, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation. Hazards maybe natural, anthropogenic or socionatural in origin.

Through a series of comprehensive studies, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) under the Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean (EnGenDER) Project has identified gender inequality of climate change and disaster risk impacts across the energy sector. The energy sector is a category of companies related to the production and

supply of energy, including those that explore, produce, refine, market, store and transport oil and gas, coal and other consumable fuels. Companies that offer oil and gas equipment are also considered part of the energy sector. There are two major types of energy: non-renewable energy, which includes oil and petroleum products, gasoline, natural gas, diesel, fuel and nuclear; and renewable energy, such as hydropower, solar power and wind power.

## Why a Gender Lens (Analysis)?

Women are less likely to be involved in risk management and to have minimal control over decisions in the energy sector. Women from indigenous communities are far less likely to be involved in such processes, than non-indigenous women. In the aftermath of a disaster, women and their families, are affected, as are their livelihoods. Women's lack of participation in risk management planning and decision-making increases the burden of climate-related impacts on women and their families.

Children, aged 0-17 years, and youth, aged 15-24 years, are also affected by disaster impacts to the energy sector, including disruption to their education and increased risks of sexual and gender-based violence and possible abduction when traveling after dark, as a result of lack of and poor lighting. Given children are under the care of their parents, their vulnerability is directly related to the capacities and mechanisms that their parents have to cope with the impacts of disasters.



# Climate Change and Disaster Risks

Across the Caribbean, an analysis of gender inequality due to the impacts of climate change, hazards and disasters on the energy sector revealed:



Loss of electricity impacts women and children, as it affects women's abilities to perform domestic and child care responsibilities (e.g., cooking and cleaning) in the home and family.



Loss of communication capabilities via the internet and/or phone services as electronic devices depend on an electricity source; as a result, family members are unable to communicate with each other or to access emergency and social services post-impact.



Men are likely to lose their livelihoods, which can lead to trauma and increased stress and mental health challenges; women's livelihood resilience is even lower than men's.

# Coping Mechanisms Identified

In the Caribbean, women and men who have been impacted by climate change events have adapted and coped in one or more of the following ways:



Women and men have accessed government support through social protection programmes.



Women and men have utilized natural resources as a source of energy.

# Opportunities for Gender-Responsive Disaster Resilience

What can be done to ensure that climate change policies and strategies are gender-responsive? What can be done to reduce the gendered risks for vulnerable populations?



Policymakers can:



Include disaster risk reduction and gender considerations in energy sectoral plans.



Plan for stronger and more resilient energy sector infrastructure.



Include NGOs and CSOs in decision-making to amplify and represent the voices and specific needs of women, persons with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ+ community in the development of energy plans.



Address psychosocial support after both small, intense events and large extensive events.

This *Gender & Climate Change Resilience Series* is a UN Women publication under the EnGenDER Project. The EnGenDER Project is funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UKFCDO). Led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the EnGenDER Project is also jointly implemented by the United Nations Entity

for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women), World Food Programme (WFP) and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). Nine Caribbean countries are beneficiaries of the EnGenDER Project – Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname.