



**EnGenDER**

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

# Gender Inequality of Climate Change and Disaster Risk in the Protected Areas/Forestry Sector

March 2022

Gender & Climate Change Resilience Series

11 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 protected areas/forestry sector. Protected areas commonly found in the Caribbean are national parks, marine parks, forest reserves, protected forests, wildlife reserves, natural monuments and fish sanctuaries.

## Why a Gender Lens (Analysis)?

Due to the small geographic size of Caribbean countries, the ability of a country's protected areas/forestry sector to effectively respond to climate change events and disasters is directly related to the intensity of the event or disaster and its impact. It has been observed that women play a crucial role in natural resource management and other value-adding activities in both households and at the community level. Although both women and men rely on resources to operate small businesses in protected areas, there are typically more women than men operating small businesses in these areas (e.g., small craft vendors).



# 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 protected areas/ forestry sector revealed:



The effects of droughts and wildfires on forest flora and fauna can be widespread and devastating. In some cases, wildfires can have a negative impact on electricity distribution, which poses challenges for women and girls who are largely responsible for domestic and care responsibilities in the home and family.



Destruction of forests as a result of landslides and wildfires poses significant challenges for people, including indigenous communities who utilize the forest for shelter and natural resources, such as materials for construction of homes and their livelihoods (e.g., handicraft or craft making).



Men tend to dominate in the governance of communities that rely on resources from protected areas, which results in unequal access to services, education and information for women post-disaster.



Geographic isolation impacts women more so than men due to cultural practices that place restrictions on women's movement. For example, in some rural communities, it is a tradition for women to remain at home and perform unpaid domestic and care work for the family.



Women are more likely to spend more money to stock up on essentials in preparation for a disaster or hazard, which may result in women becoming more financially vulnerable should the length of time for activities to return to normal take longer than anticipated.

# Coping Mechanisms Identified

In the Caribbean, women and men who have been impacted by climate change events and

hazards have adapted and coped in one or more of the following ways:



Engaged in disaster preparedness activities.



Migrated to other countries in the Caribbean region and/or internationally.



Re-established nature-based enterprises as alternative means of recovering from the impact.



# 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:



Raise awareness on operating legal businesses in the protected areas/forestry sector.



Raise awareness on gender-related issues in disaster risk reduction and management.



Include disaster risk reduction and gender elements into sectoral plans.



Apply ecosystem-based approaches and reforestation activities.



Consider conducting vulnerability analyses of protected areas and forests that include the collection of sex-disaggregated data and focus on gender issues and issues faced by indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women and girls.

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.