



EnGenDER

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

Gender Inequality of Climate Change and Disaster Risk: A Focus on Ending Violence Against Women

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15 of 18



Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW)

Violence against women and girls (VAW) is one of the most common forms of insecurity facing the Caribbean. The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines VAW as “all acts of gender-based violence that results in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm

or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies the elimination of VAW as a crucial priority for achieving gender equality and sustainable development.¹ After all, VAW is a cause and consequence of gender inequality and a major obstacle to women and girls’ enjoyment of all human rights and their full participation in society and the economy. EVAW is a cross-cutting priority across the SDGs and vital to achieving SDGs in areas including poverty eradication, health, education, sustainable cities, and just and peaceful societies.² The 2030 Agenda builds on existing international frameworks that address VAW, particularly CEDAW and the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-seventh session.³

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1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women



1 UN General Assembly (2016). Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. Seventy-first session, Item 27 of the provisional agenda, Advancement of Women.
2 UN General Assembly (2016). Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. Seventy-first session, Item 27 of the provisional agenda, Advancement of Women.
3 Ibid, 2016.

Climate Change, Disaster Resilience and EVAW

Climate change and disaster impacts can accelerate pre-existing gender inequalities that exist within a society, and exacerbate deprivation, marginalization and discrimination against women and girls.⁴ This affects the ability of women and girls' to recover from climate-related emergencies and disasters, which poses risks to their livelihoods, particularly when they are unable to earn a living and support themselves and their families. This also increases women and girls' risks and vulnerabilities to experiencing sexual and gender-based violence.



Actions to Prevent VAW When Disasters Strike

What can be done to ensure that climate change policies and strategies are gender-responsive? What actions can be taken to prevent VAW when disaster strikes?

Policymakers can take the following steps or actions:

Interagency Collaboration

Protection Working Groups should collaborate with National Gender Mechanisms, National Disaster Offices and relevant disaster response agencies for the general protection of displaced persons and prevention of VAW, and to ensure child protection and the delivery of mental health and psychosocial support services.



Strengthen Referral Pathways

Ensure referral pathways exist to make sure that survivors are safely linked to supportive and competent services in a timely manner, including mental health and psychosocial support, healthcare, legal aid, safe housing/shelter and income generating opportunities.



⁴ Castañeda, C.I., L. Sabater, C. Owren & A. Boyer Emmett (2020). Gender-based violence and environment linkages: the violence of inequality. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Retrieved on 5 March 2022 from: <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/48969>



Mobilize Humanitarian Efforts

Dignity and hygiene kits should be distributed to provide aid to women and girls in maintaining proper hygiene after being displaced.



Strengthen Capacity

Ensure first responders and hotline workers are better equipped to deal with issues surrounding VAW caused by the shock and stress of the disaster.



Create Child-Friendly Spaces

To eliminate violence against children, including both girls and boys, child-friendly spaces should be developed to guarantee children's rights to survival, development, participation and protection in situations of displacement due to disasters.



Create Safe Spaces

In the case of biological disasters, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, gender-based violence shelters are crucial safe places for survivors of intimate partner violence, domestic and/or family violence, and sexual violence. Gender-based violence shelters provide critical support to female survivors and their children, including immediate protection, safe emergency shelter and long-term transitional housing.

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