

HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

2019 Annual Report



INTRODUCTION

167.6 million people were estimated to need humanitarian assistance in 2020 – a number expected to have increased with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the highest reported figure in decades.¹ Refugee crises continue to increase in scope, scale, and complexity. There are 25.9 million refugees around the world who have been forced from their homes and countries due to disasters and conflicts.² 85 percent of the world's refugees are hosted in low and middle-income countries, which are facing their own economic and developmental challenges. Further, one in three people is exposed to earthquakes, one billion people in 155 countries are exposed to floods, tropical cyclone winds pose a threat to 1.6 billion people in 89 countries, and the impact of extreme droughts impacts 55 million every year.³

Women and girls not only constitute at least half of those affected by crises, they are also affected in distinct and disproportionate ways, as emergencies deepen existing gender inequalities and exacerbate risks, including loss of agency and self-reliance, and heightened exposure to gender-based violence. There is increasing recognition that the protection, leadership and empowerment of crisis-affected and disaster-prone women and girls is essential for sustainable and efficient impact in humanitarian action. While this progress is evident in normative and policy frameworks, it remains to be systematically translated to action in the lives of women



*A scene from the UN Women Oasis in the Za'tari refugee camp.
Photo: UN Women/Marta Garbarino*

and girls in crisis settings and disaster-prone contexts.

In its work on humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction, UN Women prioritizes promoting accountability for gender equality globally and locally; addressing the immediate needs of crisis-affected women and girls; and strengthening the resilience of crisis-affected and at-risk populations by empowering women and girls and leveraging their leadership and engagement in decision making processes. With specific attention to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, UN Women emphasizes the empowerment for women and girls as a life-saving intervention to ensure their survival,

¹ OCHA (2019). Global Humanitarian Response Plan

² UNHCR (2020). *Figures at a Glance*.

³ European Union (2017). *Atlas of the Human Planet 2017: Global Exposure to Natural Hazards*

protection, and recovery through crisis prevention and preparedness, resilience, and transformative change.

In 2019, UN Women utilized its triple mandate across normative, coordination, and programmatic functions to continue advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian settings and disaster contexts. At the global level, UN Women published the first 'IASC Gender Policy Accountability Framework Report' looking system wide at the integration of gender into the planning and implementation of UN-led humanitarian response programmes across 26 crisis countries. It also launched the online version of the IASC Gender Handbook to provide easy access to the go-to resource of practical guidance on how to integrate gender across all phases of the humanitarian programme cycle. In 24 crisis-affected countries, UN Women offered gender expertise to the country-level humanitarian architecture to help ensure that the coordinated UN response was informed by the needs and priorities of women and girls in 2019. Through UN Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) programme, 509,000 women and girls and 29,000 men and boys in 26 countries – including in the Rohingya refugee crisis, the Syria crisis, the Venezuela crisis and the Cyclone Idai response – benefitted from livelihoods, leadership and GBV prevention and response services. In disaster risk reduction and resilience, UN Women cooperated globally with more than 100 partners to advance women's leadership and gender-responsiveness in global disaster resilience processes, including the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, COP25, the World Reconstruction Forum, and the Small Islands Development States Resilience Initiative. Through the Second Chance Education programme being piloted

in six countries, 32 new Learning Centers were opened in 2019 and 12,706 women benefited from educational and vocational training activities.

At the global level, UN Women's Humanitarian Action and Crisis Response Office and the Peace and Security Office were merged in 2019 to ensure that UN Women remained fit-for-purpose to prepare and respond to increasingly protracted and complex crises that cut across conflicts and disasters. With a view to scaling up implementation of commitments to gender equality, this merger presents a strategic opportunity for UN Women to step up its engagement, positioning and partnerships along the humanitarian, peace and development nexus and reflects the new thinking to better assist, protect, and empower crisis-affected women and girls around the world.

Donors

UN Women is grateful for the support of donors for its work on humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction.



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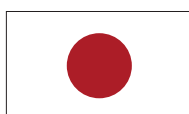
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- **UN Women National Committee in Australia**
- **UN Women National Committee in USA**

2019 RESULTS 'AT A GLANCE'

24

crisis-affected countries

received gender expertise from UN Women at the country level humanitarian architecture.



In 8 countries,

UN Women supported Post-Disaster Needs Assessments and disaster risk assessments to adequately assess and cost the impact of disasters on women and to leverage women's agency to reduce disaster risk.

To help ensure that gender is integrated in coordinated crisis response planning, UN Women successfully mobilized **16 deployments to 11 UN Women** offices from standby partners.

In 18 countries

UN Women directly contributed to the **coordinated humanitarian response** as a member of the Humanitarian Country Team or its equivalent.

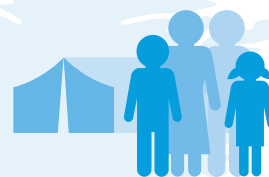


UN Women also directly served

61,377 women and girls in 7 countries

to enhance their disaster resilience through targeted action, including through climate-resilient livelihoods and women leadership in community prevention and preparedness.

UN Women provided financial and technical support to **752 local women-led and women's rights organizations**, enabling them to participate in and guide humanitarian response and refugee response plans.



In 16 countries

UN Women provided **technical assistance in the preparation of the Humanitarian Needs Overview/Humanitarian Response Plan** or its equivalent.



71 multi-purpose women's centers

operated by UN Women and with UN Women's support helping serve as a one-stop-shop to provide an integrated approach to women's leadership, livelihoods and protection from violence.



UN Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) programme, directly served:

509,000

women and girls

29,000

men and boys

26 countries

Of this number, **82,000 crisis-affected women and girls in 15 countries** strengthened their engagement and representation in humanitarian and refugee response mechanisms in their local contexts with support from UN Women's leadership and empowerment related activities.

In disaster risk reduction and resilience, UN Women contributed to strengthening women's disaster resilience and to gender-responsive disaster risk reduction policies, strategies and assessments in **41 countries** partnering with national governments and **562 women's organizations**.

To help advance women leadership and gender equality in global resilience conferences and processes, including COP25 and the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, **UN Women established strategic partnerships with**

100+
partners

In its first year

40,000+ users

users accessed the online IASC Gender Handbook launched by UN Women.



New gender-responsive disaster resilience policies covering an additional

181 million

people were adopted in 2019, increasing women's capacity to withstand disasters, survive them and to recover from them.

Through the Second Chance Education pilot programme in six countries,

32 new Learning Centers were opened

12,706 women benefited from educational and vocational training activities across the six pilot countries.

Over 2,250

humanitarian actors and frontline responders were trained by UN Women on gender-responsive humanitarian action.

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION & DISASTER RISK REDUCTION BY UN WOMEN IN 2019

Building the Normative Framework – Development of Policies, Strategies and Action Orientated Guidance

In 2019, UN Women influenced numerous policy and normative developments and contributed to the creation of guidance material on how to translate commitments, standards and roles and responsibilities into field level action.

UN Women actively contributed to the 2019 **Global Refugee Forum** to ensure that the focus on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls contained within the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants is sustained. As a co-sponsor of two priority areas within the Global Refugee Forum – ‘strengthening protection capacity’ and ‘promoting access to quality education’ – UN Women played an important role in advocating to uphold the rights of refugee women and girls and enhance their roles as leaders



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