

# HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

2019 Annual Report



Produced by UN Women's Humanitarian  
Unit | Peace Security and Humanitarian  
Division

**Design:** RecDesign

**Cover Photo:** Kuda Mariam, who was  
forcibly displaced due to attacks by Boko  
Haram, tends to her newly-planted garlic  
crop north of Maroua, Cameroon.

**Photo Credit:** UN Women/Ryan Brown

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# 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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,

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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

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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.

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## Donors

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



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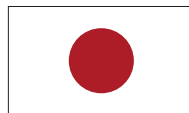
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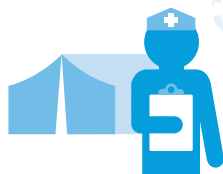
# 2019 RESULTS 'AT A GLANCE'

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## 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.

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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.



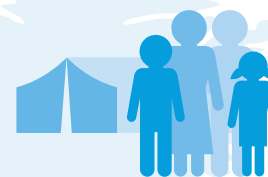
UN Women also directly served

### 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.

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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**

In its first year

**40,000+ users**

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



**100+**  
partners

**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.

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# 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



*Syrian women attend the preparatory event co-hosted by UN Women and UNHCR for the first Global Refugee Forum.  
Photo: UN Women/Tayfun Dalkılıç*



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and agents of change. In partnership with UNHCR, UN Women also co-hosted an event 'Women on the Move – Towards a Gender-Responsive Global Refugee Forum' to mobilize support and concrete pledges from Member States by bringing the voices local women's organizations leading the response in crisis-affected countries to the Forum.

During the 2019 **ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment**, UN Women – in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN in Geneva, Action Aid, and UN OCHA – organized an event drawing attention to the need to make gender equality a reality in humanitarian settings by translating standards to action on the ground. UN Women called for gender equality to extend beyond gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and other protection concerns; and highlighted the broader agenda of women's empowerment, self-reliance, and resilience necessary to achieve sustainable change.

UN Women's contributions to the **Secretary General's Report on Assistance to Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Africa** (A/74/322) helped ensure that – for the first time – the Report included a dedicated focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and recognized the role of women as decision-makers and agents of change.

In partnership with the Women's Refugee Commission, UN Women led the analysis of the progress made by stakeholders in the past year towards the empowerment of women and girls in line with the World Humanitarian Summit's **Agenda for Humanity Commitments**. The paper examined and identified positive trends, innovative programs, as well as existing challenges, and presented key recommendations required for advancement of gender equality in humanitarian action.

In the area of **disaster risk reduction**, UN Women provided normative support in the formulation of gender-responsive plans, policies, tools and actions and supported the collection and use of sex, age and disability disaggregated data as well as targeted investment in women and girls. This included contributions to the key messages and advocacy on GEWE at the 2019 Global Platform on DRR (GP), COP25, the World Reconstruction Conference and the Small Island States Resilience Initiative practitioners' network, where UN Women co-organized technical sessions and side events and helped ensure that the outcome documents, such as the GP Chair's Summary, reflected this commitment to gender. As a result, the Summary highlighted the imperative of gender responsive DRR initiatives, promoting the leadership and participation of women with targeted interventions. UN Women also leveraged its experience from the ground, to inform the development of operational guidelines for the UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies thereby ensuring that gender was mainstreamed in the guidance.

The **Secretary General's Report on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030** (A/74/248) recognized UN Women's contribution to significant advancements on gender-responsive disaster risk reduction, including UN Women's support for gender-responsive disaster risk and impact assessments in 16 countries, the appointment of gender focal points in national disaster risk reduction platforms in 8 countries and UN Women's role in 10 countries empowering women to enable them to lead the development and implementation of preparedness action plans and gender-responsive early warning in their communities. UN Women's contribution to the report also helped ensure that the business case of gender-responsive approaches was

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highlighted as a means of rendering disaster risk reduction interventions more effective and reducing the vulnerability of women in times of disaster.

At **COP25**, UN Women focused on highlighting women's leadership for climate resilience and showcasing the importance of promoting women's voice, agency and leadership. To assist countries to strengthen their understanding of **disaster risk**, UN Women and UNICEF launched a joint publication at COP25 on the gender and age dimensions of disasters. It explores the connection between gender and age inequality and disaster risk, examining evidence at a global level, and in three case study countries (Nepal, Malawi, and Dominica). This study is accompanied by a guidance tool for country and local level DRR practitioners, which assists Member States and partners to identify vulnerabilities, needs and opportunities through a simple 6 Step approach to understanding the differential impact of disasters on women and children. This 6-step approach produces a deeper, richer understanding of differential risk, underpinned by better, more inclusive data.

## Bringing Gender Equality to Coordination Mechanisms

### COORDINATION AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL

UN Women has been instrumental in ensuring that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are a central focus in the strategic priorities of global humanitarian coordination. In 2019, UN Women published the first ever '**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. Through its function as the Gender Desk which develops the annual Gender Policy Accountability Framework Report, UN Women has established – for the first time - a reporting mechanism that feeds directly back to the IASC (the global humanitarian coordination mechanism), providing a centralized report on how well it is delivering on its gender commitments, standards and roles and responsibilities.

Building on the publication of the **Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action** in 2018, an online version of the handbook in Arabic, English, French and Spanish was launched in 2019. This

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE 2018 GENDER ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK REPORT

**Overall, the Report noted that the IASC was inconsistent in upholding its gender commitments.** For instance, while findings showed 90% of Humanitarian Needs Overviews had some level of gender analysis and 56% used SADD in at least half of clusters, only 46% had both. Humanitarian Response Plans, which follow the HNO, were also often inconsistent in utilizing the gender aspects which were prioritized in the HNO. Inconsistencies were also apparent at the global level: for example, among the Principal's output in 2018, only one-third of its published decisions reflected inclusion of the commitments to gender. Going forward, the Report will be produced on an annual basis to serve as guiding and monitoring resource to further advance the integration of gender in humanitarian action



*Regional Consultation with Women's Civil Society in Addis Ababa to inform processes relating to the Grand Bargain. UN Women/Maria Karadenizli*

provided the worldwide humanitarian system access to practical guidance and examples on the integration of gender into all aspects of the humanitarian programme cycle. In its first year of being active, the online handbook was accessed by approximately 40,000 users worldwide. Face to face training was also provided to over 100 humanitarian workers from various UN, INGO, LINGO agencies in Turkey, Vanuatu, and Libya, as well as regional trainings in Asia and Eastern Africa.

Through UN Women's efforts as convener of the **Grand Bargain Friends of Gender Group**, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in crisis contexts has been recognized by the Grand Bargain Eminent Person as an area for transformative action. UN Women successfully channeled the priorities of over 90 local women's organizations from Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific into global advocacy efforts within the Grand Bargain, the leading space on global humanitarian financing. The Friends of Gender Group presented clear recommendations to

advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through the Grand Bargain core commitments in the priority workstreams: localization, cash and voucher assistance, joint and impartial needs assessments, and participation revolution.

2019 also saw UN Women's increased role in establishing a strong **evidence base for gender in humanitarian action** on issues related to cash and voucher assistance, and accountability for affected populations. This is exemplified in the Gender and Development Journal's Special issue on Humanitarian Action and Crisis Response which was co-edited by UN Women and included an article by UN Women on 'Leveraging blockchain technology in humanitarian settings – opportunities and risks for women and girls.' Additionally, as co-convener of the Grand Bargain Gender and Cash sub-working group, UN Women published key resources in the gender and cash space such as the discussion paper

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on 'The Effect of Cash-Based Interventions on Gender Outcomes in Development and Humanitarian Settings'; and a guidance note on 'How to Promote Gender Equality in Humanitarian Cash and Voucher Assistance.'

**In disaster risk reduction and resilience**, UN Women cooperated with more than 100 partners, including Member States, UN agencies, civil society organizations,

research institutes, and private sector partners to advance women leadership and gender-responsiveness in **global disaster resilience conferences and negotiations**, including the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, COP25, the World Reconstruction Forum, and the Small Islands Development States Resilience Initiative.



*UN Women in Colombia. Photo: UN Women*

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UN Women also supported the revision of the UN Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction and its results-framework, which now includes gender-responsiveness in DRR as a key principle for all actors. UN Women contributed to the Words into Action (WiA) guidelines and co-authored the WiA guideline on Children & Youth Engagement in DRR and Resilience Building providing practical guidance on the implementation of the Sendai Framework.

Joining the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) as an Advisor in 2019, UN Women has been contributing to the gender-responsive revision of the CADRI sector assessment and planning tools, and country-level approaches.

To increase public awareness of the gender dimensions of disasters, UN Women also undertook a series of innovative communication strategies, using social media and engaging with journalists on gender-sensitive data communication. In the Asia-Pacific region, UN Women helped build skills of data producers, national statistics offices, and media personnel on effectively communicating gendered aspects of data and crafting stories that capture the gendered impact of disasters and the need for gender-responsive action.

### **SURGE CAPACITY FOR FIELD OFFICES**

To help ensure that gender is integrated in coordinated crisis response planning, UN Women successfully mobilized 16 **deployments** to 11 UN Women offices in 2019 from standby partners such as RedR Australia and the Norwegian Refugee Council. UN Women also entered into a new partnership with the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) to further strengthen its surge capacity. In addition, UN Women undertook three internal surge

deployments to help its field offices with time-critical support ensuring that the humanitarian response integrated the needs and capacities of affected women and girls. This included support for the development of a Gender in Humanitarian Action Profile in Myanmar, development of an Early Action Plan for the El Nino response in Papua New Guinea, and assistance in developing a livelihoods project in Haiti.



*UN Women deployed Nimarta Khuman, a Gender and Protection Advisor, through the Australia Assists Program managed by RedR. She supports the Vanuatu Government's Department of Women Affairs and the Protection Cluster. [Click here](#) for the full story.*

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## Coordination at the Country Level

### HUMANITARIAN ACTION

UN Women's leadership in ensuring the integration of gender equality in coordination mechanisms is further reflected at the country level. 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 18 countries, UN Women directly contributed to the coordinated humanitarian response as a member of the Humanitarian Country Team or its equivalent and in 16 countries,

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

UN Women's efforts to **build the capacity of the humanitarian system** on integrating gender into needs assessments and response planning is part of its long-term strategy of working with the humanitarian system to deliver on its gender equality commitments in humanitarian action. In 2019, over 2,500 humanitarian actors and frontline responders across 20 countries were trained by UN Women on various aspects of gender-responsive humanitarian action.



*A group work session during a Gender in Humanitarian Action training programme organized by UN Women for gender focal points from civil society organizations and UN agencies in Cameroon. Photo: UN Women/Emmanuel Nlend*



*An activity session during the Gender Induction programme conducted by the Gender Hub managed by UN Women in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.*

In Bangladesh, where almost a million Rohingya people are seeking refuge in **Cox's Bazar**, UN Women established a 'Gender Hub' in March 2019 to collaborate with and influence all humanitarian actors operating in Cox's Bazar. From the onset, the nature of this crisis has been a particularly gendered one with a critical need for gender to be prioritized in the response.

The Gender Hub serves as a valuable model of UN Women's role in humanitarian coordination at the country-level. Placed with the Inter Sector Coordination Group in Cox's Bazar, the Gender Hub managed by UN Women is strategically placed to collaborate and influence all sectors in the humanitarian response.

In its first year, through technical assistance, capacity development and knowledge management, the Gender Hub has strengthened the accountability of humanitarian actors to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and their capacity to design, implement, and

monitor projects that mainstream gender or directly targets women and girls. The Gender Hub piloted two localized trainings for humanitarian community in 2019: a gender induction rolled out to all new staff from different organizations working on the Rohingya response, and gender mainstreaming in food security training. The Gender Hub also worked closely with individual clusters in ensuring that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls was mainstreamed in the 2020 Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Response in CXB. This was carried out through the review and implementation of the Gender with Age Marker to measure the extent to which JRP projects contributed to gender equality; through the development of Gender Tip Sheets for specific clusters; through targeted trainings for priority clusters; and through learning forums that have facilitated the identification of key priorities under GEWE in a coordinated manner.

### A TESTIMONY:

*“The Gender Hub has equipped us with the tools to effectively provide advice to sectors for a better gender integrated response [...] and the development of specific gender training for food security sector was really helpful in engaging the sector’s partners. The involvement of gender focal points in Gender with Age Marker review has enabled us to learn more on the application of the marker in the project cycle”.*  
Gender Focal Point for the Food Security Sector and Gender Officer, WFP

Further, through the Training of Trainers conducted for over 100 humanitarian actors by UN Women’s sub-office in Cox’s Bazar, participants were provided with training modules and tools developed by UN Women with inputs from Rohingya women. Serving as a concrete example of enabling participatory and transformative change, these interventions facilitate Rohingya women’s leadership and decision-making skills at the individual, household and community levels.

- Exemplifying UN Women’s role in building the capacity of partners in gender in humanitarian action, UN Women in **Nigeria** trained over a hundred humanitarian workers in Maiduguri and Damaturu from CSOs, UN, and INGOs in 2019. The training also contributed to improving the integration of gender concerns across the various sectors in the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and the application of sex and age disaggregated data in the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2019-2022. Similarly, UN Women provided technical support to the development of the 2019-2022 multi-year humanitarian response framework thereby strengthening the ability of humanitarian response to better meet the needs of women and girls.
- In **Turkey**, resilience and coping capacities of refugee and host community women were supported by UN Women through humanitarian and development programs targeting crisis-affected women and girls

as per the UN International Protection and Migration Work Group and 3RP Progress reports. 400 first line responders from local and central government institutions and CSOs started to address the needs of women and girls in a more gender responsive manner. This approach contributed to the adaptation of a stronger gender perspective in the humanitarian response as demonstrated by the IASC gender and age marker scores of the Sector Plans for 2020-2021.

### DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE

UN Women implemented joint programs with sixteen UN agencies including UNICEF, UNISDR, UNDP, FAO and UNFPA and numerous NGOs, including CARE International, OXFAM, Pacific Disability Forum, International Disability Association, and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, to enhance the gender-responsiveness of the





*Community workers at the Women's Centre supported by UN Women in Mora, Far North Region of Cameroon. Fanta (center) fled her village and came to Mora four years ago. Fanta received counselling and other services from the women's centre supported by UN Women. Today, she works at the women's centre as a community worker. Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown.*

UN system's DRR and resilience programming and to empower women and girls as actors and leaders of disaster resilience.

- Through its EmPower project, UN Women in **Asia-Pacific** supported governments and key stakeholders, to generate, analyse and use sex, age, and disability disaggregated data (SADDD) to reflect the needs of women and girls in DRR policy formulation and implementation. UN Women prepared regional methodological notes to integrate gender in disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific thereby enabling DRR policy makers to target the resilience of women and girls specifically. National methodological guidelines and protocols for Bangladesh, Cambodia and Viet Nam were also prepared to provide DRR practitioners

with the information needed for gender-responsive approaches.

- In Africa, UN Women and partner UN agencies assisted **Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe** to undertake gender-responsive disaster risk assessments. In Sierra Leone for instance, the UN Women-led gender and risk assessment was done in the wake of the mudslide as a means of mitigating potential crisis with grave impact on women and girls. As a result, a Gender Alert was issued to inform response and recovery efforts. In Zimbabwe, UN Women undertook together with IOM a gender sensitive rapid assessment of the impact of Cyclone Idai (March-April 2019).

## PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTIONS

UN Women's **programmatic interventions** in crisis contexts and disaster-prone settings has focused on the promotion of women's leadership and participation; enhancing women's self-reliance including through income generation and livelihood activities; and prevention of gender-based violence. Across crisis-affected countries, UN Women partnered with ten UN agencies to deliver programmes at the country-level helping ensure a coordinated and integrated humanitarian response.<sup>4</sup>

## Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection

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, and GBV prevention and response services. Of this number, 82,000 crisis-affected women and girls in 15 countries strengthened their engagement

### JORDAN



*Falha Abrabo assists her students in one of the daily literacy lessons that she gives at the UN Women Oasis in Za'atari refugee camp. Through UN Women's incentive-based volunteer programme at the Oasis, Falha now earns an income as a literacy teacher. Photo: UN Women/Lauren Rooney*

In Jordan, the 12 Oasis Centres managed by UN Women in refugee camps and host communities reached 33,700 direct and indirect beneficiaries in 2019. 2,473 women benefitted from cash for work opportunities, and 105 women were provided with ongoing counselling and GBV protection and prevention services. 1,885 women participated in awareness sessions on SGBV prevention

and protection, and 3500 women accessed Oasis education services. Among the women participating in UN Women led activities, 98% of women beneficiaries reported an increase in self-confidence and empowerment; 70% reported a reduction in domestic violence and 75% reported an increase in household decision-making.

<sup>4</sup> UNOCHA, UNFPA, WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR, FAO, UNDP, IOM, WHO, and UNEP

and representation in humanitarian and refugee response mechanisms in their local contexts with support from UN Women's leadership and empowerment related activities. In many crisis-settings, these services were provided through the 71 multi-purpose women's centers<sup>5</sup> operated by UN Women or with UN Women's support to provide an integrated approach to women's leadership, livelihoods and protection from violence.

- In **Palestine**, 5208 women and 501 men benefited from gender-responsive humanitarian and relief assistance including benefiting from multi-sectoral services (GBV case management, psychosocial and legal assistance, and referral services) through interventions supported by UN Women in 2019. Additionally, 250 women, including displaced women, women with disabilities and survivors of violence received cash-for-work opportunities enhancing their economic capacity. 91% of women participating in the cash- for-work interventions reported an increase in their household income; about 83% of the women reported that the work opportunities alleviated their poor living conditions, while 71% reported that their intra-household tension has decreased due to the availability of a cash income, and 55% reported that the earned income elevated their social status within the family and allowed them to participate in decision-making.
- In **Uganda**, 118,581 (90,745 refugee and 27,836 host) women and girls directly accessed UN Women support, in addition to 8,856 (5,401 refugee and 3,455 host) men and boys. 50,990 (39,263 refugee and 11,727 host) women and girl survivors of SGBV, and 4077 (3181 refugee and 896 host) men and boys benefited from legal aid services. This has contributed to increased access to justice for SGBV survivors

and more women and girls feeling safe in refugee settlements and host communities. 18,867 (14339 refugee and 4528 host) women and girls' survivors of SGBV and 3,666 (2823 refugee and 843 host) males also benefited from psychosocial support. Such interventions resulted in improved social functioning physical and emotional aspects evidenced by the ability of survivors to take care of themselves and their children, reduced household conflicts and the ability to participate in livelihoods activities.

### INVESTING IN GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE LOCALIZATION: PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Partnerships with local women's organizations and self-organized associations of crisis-affected and refugee women and girls remains a priority for UN Women. In 2019, 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



*SADA Women's Centre established by UN Women in Gaziantep is run in partnership with ILO, the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (SGDD-ASAM), and Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality. It offers vocational training, various skills training, Turkish language courses and supportive counselling to help refugee women apply for decent work and establish small businesses. UN Women/Sinem Aydin Lopez*

<sup>5</sup> Also referred to as Oases Centers in the Arab States region or Women's Empowerment Centers in other regions.

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and recovery including in relation to regional refugee and resilience response plans. Leadership of displaced women, including in peace negotiations, formulation of political solutions, humanitarian, reconstruction, and recovery assessments, as well as in planning and implementation processes, has been key in creating conditions that would help refugees to return to their countries of origin. Through UN Women's financial and technical support in countries including Uganda, Bangladesh, Kenya, Mozambique and Colombia, women and youth are increasingly represented in leadership positions, refugee camp management committees and DRR national platforms and have enhanced impact on humanitarian, national and local level planning processes.

- In **Colombia**, UN Women helped strengthen the capacity of 66 women's organizations to respond to humanitarian needs arising from mixed migratory flows in 2019. As a result, organizations in Chocó and Nariño now have greater capacity to activate protection mechanisms and engage with local public institutions, and networks of safe spaces for women leaders and defenders of human rights were created. Five women's organizations and six community councils and boards now have community roadmaps for protection and attention in cases of GBV as a tool for the consolidation of peace and social cohesion.
- In **Uganda**, through programmatic interventions supported by UN Women in 2019, over 1,100 women (from refugee and host communities) benefited from leadership and life skills training. With support from UN Women for mentorship and other forms of assistance, individual refugee women leaders and local women's organizations have proceeded to take an active role at the district

level humanitarian decision-making spaces hosted by the local government. Inclusion of women refugee leaders and women's organizations at this level has resulted in humanitarian response planning frameworks and programming to be informed by gender assessment and analyses. With support from UN Women and partners in the Office for the Prime Minister, Uganda Women's Network and Refugee Law Project, 51 percent of women in Adjumani and 46 percent in Yumbe are participating in relief planning, through their representation in the Refugee Welfare Council (RWC) leadership structures in the refugee settlements. This is a significant improvement from 10 percent and 20 percent of women participating in 2017 for Adjumani and Yumbe respectively.

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 across the six pilot countries. Placing the focus on the economic empowerment and self-reliance of women, the activities to strengthen women's learning and earning pathways are coupled with capacity building initiatives making women aware about their rights and new opportunities.



*A group of young women attending the distribution of the start-up kits in the Ngam refugee camp as part of the Second Chance Education and Vocational Training Programme in Cameroon. Photo: UN Women/ Emmanuel Nlend*

In Cameroon, UN Women launched the Second Chance Education Project in collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MIPROFF) and the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MINEFOP). 13,000 crisis-affected or at-risk women and young women who are refugees, IDPs and host population were

identified to benefit from long terms and short terms training in tailoring, farming, livestock and petty trade as well as startup kits. In 2019, 1,348 women completed entrepreneurship training in agriculture, livestock, tailoring, and small trade and have started their own small businesses with a start-up kit provided by the SCE programme.



## PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES USING THE CENTRAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND (CERF)

### SUPPORTING FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN BANGLADESH

Heavy rainfall since July 2019 caused massive flooding in low-lying areas in Bangladesh, affecting an estimated 7.6 million people. The loss of shelter, crops and livestock has taken a toll on small farmers and agricultural laborers. They have taken refuge in overcrowded temporary shelters prone to outbreaks of water-borne diseases, due to inadequate water supplies and sanitation services. Among the affected, an estimated 5,500 female headed households (FHHs) have been particularly vulnerable: they are more likely to have lost their livelihoods as

agricultural laborers and to be burdened with increased household responsibilities without resources or adequate support system. They also face a higher risk of gender-based violence and are more prone to negative coping mechanisms, such as forced labor, child marriage or trafficking.

Working with the World Food Program (WFP) and local administration, UN Women identified 4,200 FHHs (comprising approximately 18,300 persons) in emergency shelters to provide them with life-saving emergency support. Collaborations with implementing partners such as Christian Aid and three local women’s organizations helped identify the families most in need (which included persons with disabilities) and maintaining regular communication with local administration throughout the project.

UN Women partnered with local district



*Flooding in Bangladesh in 2019 destroyed Nurun Nahar’s home. Photo: UN Women/Mohammad Rakibul Hasan*

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officials to provide livelihood skills training on raising livestock and protecting the animals from the floods. The FHHs were then provided with emergency conditional and unrestricted cash grants through mobile cash transfers (USD 118 per household). More than 95% of the women bought livestock with the cash support. “I am having new hopes” said Bizli, a woman who lost her tailoring business in the floods and now supplements her domestic help income by selling eggs. Monowara,

another participant, adds:

*“[I am] now so happy to see the results and I will apply my knowledge of rearing the animals for [a] better outcome, so that gradually I could stop working as domestic help at others’ house.”*

## Women’s Resilience in Disaster Risk Reduction

In 2019, UN Women’s field work in **disaster risk reduction** focused on expanding the Women’s Resilience to Disasters (WRD) approach by promoting women’s disaster resilience through targeted action and facilitating gender responsive DRR systems, plans, strategies and budgets. UN Women contributed to gender-responsive **disaster resilience policies**, strategies, plans and needs assessments in 41 countries, covering 181 million people in close cooperation with national governments and 562 women’s organizations. UN Women facilitated women’s organizations’ participation and leadership in the development of disaster resilience plans and policies that identify and address the needs of at-risk and disaster affected women and girls. By empowering local women leaders and providing technical and bridging services between DRR stakeholders and women’s organizations, UN Women also contributed to gender-responsive early warning systems. In eight countries, UN

Women supported Post-Disaster Needs Assessments and other Risk Assessments in 2019 to ensure the inclusion of gender considerations.

UN Women also worked with 61,377 women and girls in 7 countries to enhance their **disaster resilience** including through climate-resilient livelihoods and women leadership in community prevention and preparedness and contributed to replication and upscaling of successful pilots by partners.

- In **Haiti**, UN Women reinforced capacities of women and girls to prevent natural disasters and conflicts. Through UN Women’s support, 52 women organizations and networks of women’s groups from the North-East, North West, South, and Grand-Anse are now better equipped to respond to disasters. These networks of women’s organizations specializing in disaster risk management serve as focal points for gender issues within the platform and national mechanisms and channel women’s voices at all stages of risk and disaster management. With this support,

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the Directorate of Civil Protection (DPC) is better informed, the knowledge and practices of women are effectively integrated in preparedness and response plans, and women's participation and leadership are facilitated.

- A **south-south knowledge exchange** organized by UN Women brought women farmers, civil society and DRR practitioners from the Caribbean and the Pacific regions together to share best practices and lessons on disaster and climate resilience in Small Island Development States. Participants identified successful disaster resilient agricultural practices and shared innovative initiatives to strengthen women's disaster resilience. Through this exchange, market vendor associations in the Caribbean have integrated lessons learned from their counterparts in the Pacific to enhance their disaster resilience and local farmers from both regions have replicated successful practices such as

tool and seed banks and linkages with mobile, disaster resilient markets.

- In **Kenya**, UN Women has helped strengthen the capacity of grass root women and youths affected by disasters and emergencies – as right holders - to demand accountability and inclusion in disaster risk governance both at national and county levels. This has seen increased participation of women and youth (approximately 40%) in the National Platform for DRR (NPfDRR) – at the national level - as well as in County DRR Committees and/or County steering Group (CSG) – at the local levels. Through continued advocacy and sensitization efforts by UN Women, women and youth are increasingly being recognized as key players in decision making and coordination of DRR interventions and processes, given their understanding of local context and their critical role as first responders to disasters at the local level.



*Women farmers, civil society representative, and DRR practitioners from the Caribbean and the Pacific regions sharing experiences at the Namaka Market in Fiji*



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# LOOKING AHEAD



*Young girls looking over the Balukhali Rohingya refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Photo: UN Women/Allison Joyce*

In 2019, UN Women began the process of merging the Organization's work on Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action and Crisis Response to ensure that the agency remains fit-for-purpose as the significance of a humanitarian-development-peace nexus driven approach grows against the backdrop of increasingly complex and protracted crises and increasing number, frequency and intensity of disasters, particularly due to climate change. The merger of Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action and Crisis Response provides an opportunity for UN Women to consolidate

its humanitarian, prevention, preparedness and crisis response efforts, building on the findings of the Corporate Evaluation on the Humanitarian Action and Crisis Response in 2019. As such, the merger and the evaluation findings provide a framework on next steps and 2020 priorities.

This includes the development of a new UN Women Humanitarian Action Strategy that guides the organization in ensuring that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls remain central to all humanitarian and disaster risk reduction

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efforts. Clearly defining UN Women's added value within the UN humanitarian and disaster resilience architecture, the strategy will position UN Women as a key player across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus, building normative frameworks and coordination tools, guidance and programming to create long term, durable solutions, transitioning from immediate humanitarian response to long term self-reliance and resilience of disaster and conflict affected women and girls. It will also further enhance partnerships with other UN humanitarian and disaster risk reduction agencies (OCHA, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, IOM, WHO, UNDRR, UNDP, and FAO) to expand services to the most at-risk and crisis-affected women and girls and expanding funding and leadership opportunities to women's organizations in disaster and crisis contexts. UN Women will prioritize its highly effective coordination and normative work at the global, regional, country, and sub-national levels to inform programming approaches in priority countries, improving accountability and programming approaches catalyze longer-term transformative change in prevention, preparedness and resilience in humanitarian and disaster contexts. In order to do so, UN Women will advocate for increased funding, both core and non-core resources to ensure humanitarian action, crisis response and disaster risk management interventions are less reactive, increasing overall efficiency and impact.



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