



Side event – 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women: Untapped potential: leadership of women, climate change and disaster risk reduction in Central Asia

March 15, 2022

Summary

Climate change, environmental degradation and disasters disproportionately affect some groups of the population, with gender largely determining how disasters affect people. Thus, environmental and climate disasters tend to exacerbate many existing gender inequalities. Some of the factors that cause increased vulnerability and insecurity of women include:

- discrimination and the unequal access to income opportunities: economic and production resources, in particular, in rural areas;
- underrepresentation of women in decision-making on climate action;
- unequal access to finance, technology, knowledge, and mobility;
- discriminatory social norms and stereotypes on the abilities and capacities of women as well as other social and cultural practices, norms, and traditions

Despite the commitments under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the acknowledgment that gender equality, social integration, leadership, and empowerment of women and girls are essential for building effective climate, environmental and disaster risk resilience, many commitments have not yet been translated into actions .

Although Central Asian states demonstrate progress towards achieving SDG 5 on Gender Equality, there are still unresolved problems and challenges in the region.

Conclusions and recommendations:

At the local level:

- Mobilize society and all actors starting from the grassroots level, to act on climate change and disaster risk reduction based on a “whole of society approach”¹;
- Strengthen the capacity of women at the local level in disaster risk reduction (e.g., by improving their swimming skills), organize trainings in new approaches and technologies of climate change adaption in agriculture;
- Enhance the capacity of local executive and law enforcement bodies and environmental defenders to increase understanding of local population on environmental issues (for example, illegal trees and plants cutting, etc.);

¹ a whole-of-society approach is an approach where government engages all stakeholders including the civil society, communities, academia, media, private sector, NGOs, other voluntary associations, families, and individuals to strengthen the resilience of communities and society as a whole.



- Include the concepts of “gender equality” and “empowerment of women” from national climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction policies into local urban and rural development policies;
- Increase financing to women’s organizations at the grassroots level.

At the national level:

- Promote the principle of “the hearing state” in which civil society is actively involved in all aspects of the decision-making process;
- Advance national policies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to include greenhouse gas reduction programs, promote carbon neutrality and alternative energy sources development strategies at the national level;
- Ensure the full and equal participation of women at all levels of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction governance, including in national institutions and delegations to conferences and other decision-making forums;
- Integrate gender perspectives into governance at the international, national, and local levels;
- Increase financing for gender-responsive solutions;
- Increase the quality and availability of gender statistics;
- Improve the legal framework and national legislation on environmental protection (e.g., increase penalties for illegal tree and plant cutting);
- Decarbonize the energy sector to ensure climate-resilient sustainable energy transition;
- Foster a gender-responsive and just transition towards a green economy by creating decent jobs for women in the energy workforce;
- Reduce and redistribute unpaid care work.

At the regional and international levels:

- Promote regional cooperation and development of regional approaches on climate change and disaster risk reduction.

