



United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
Secretariat, Geneva

For more information
please contact:

Brigitte Leoni
Media Relations
Tel: +41 22 917 8897
leonib@un.org
www.unisdr.org

STATEMENT

Message from Sálvano Briceño, Director of the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) on the occasion of International Women's Day 2008

"A gender perspective should be integrated into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes..."

Hyogo Framework for Action, adopted by 168 countries at the World Disaster Reduction Conference, Kobe, January 2005.

The crucial role of women in development has long been very clear to the ISDR secretariat, and it is my pleasure on this day to reaffirm the secretariat's commitment to achieving gender equality in disaster risk reduction.

Today I encourage governments to recognize and seize hold of the immense potential gains in socioeconomic development and resilience that can be made by adequately incorporating women's needs into national disaster risk reduction plans and climate change adaptation strategies. There is already substantial capacity for making real change – in this regard, I acknowledge and honor the inspirational presence of so many of our women leaders in the development and disaster risk reduction field. However, advancing gender perspectives and women's rights is not just a job for women – more men must advocate at a high level for the empowerment of women, and for the incorporation of gender budgeting into national and local development plans.

To specifically support this goal, ISDR secretariat is developing policy guidelines, implementation tools, and good practices for mainstreaming gender perspectives and disaster risk reduction into development. ISDR secretariat is working to develop an inclusive, multi-stakeholder thematic platform on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction.

We have recently facilitated a gathering of gender experts from the fields of disaster risk reduction/disaster management, climate change adaptation and natural resource management. This workshop highlighted the great potential synergies across these technically-oriented fields in the area of development, and agreed that the cross-cutting concerns and common obstacles for mainstreaming gender perspectives can be more effectively addressed by joining our efforts and sharing our knowledge.

The importance of gender mainstreaming to build resilience to disasters has never been clearer. As the frequency and impact of climate-related disasters increases, we must commit to building a culture of prevention that is founded on the specific needs, voices, roles, and potential of women, men, boys, and girls.