



FAO and African Risk Capacity advocate for women's engagement in climate action and disaster risk reduction

Collaboration will promote gender-sensitive climate policymaking and advance women's leadership in disaster risk management and preparedness

1 February 2023, Accra – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has joined efforts with the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Group to integrate gender dimensions in climate action and disaster risk management and reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa.

A new agreement signed today consolidates the ongoing partnership between FAO and ARC which has already demonstrated solid results in awareness-raising and data-generating efforts. The outlined areas of cooperation for the five-year agreement include advocacy and awareness-building, gender mainstreaming, technical mutual support, and resource mobilization.

“This collaboration holds the promise of hope for millions of African women who struggle with social and economic discrimination in climate action and related decision-making processes. While much remains to be done to achieve gender equality in the sector, our combined efforts will be a leap into a better future for the most vulnerable groups in our region,” said Abebe Haile-Gabriel, FAO Assistant Director-General, and Regional Representative for Africa.

“Through this partnership, we will continue to consolidate the gains of our strong collaboration with FAO and pave the way for more smart initiatives geared towards protecting the food security, lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations affected by extreme weather conditions and other perils. We have no doubt we will continue to count on the FAO's expertise, track record, networks, and experience as we serve our Member States and beyond,” said Ibrahima Cheikh Diong, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Director-General of the African Risk Capacity Group.

Pushing back on a decade of challenges and extreme weather

In the past ten years, the world has seen an exponential rise in climate-related disasters and, consequently, food and nutrition crises. Recent socio-economic shocks, the impacts of COVID-19, soaring food prices and the Russian Federation-Ukraine conflict have been aggravating hunger levels in Sub-Saharan Africa. These converging and compounding shocks could lead to cascading humanitarian needs. The risk of famine is real for many people in the region.

Of all the regions in the world, Africa faces the highest burden of hunger. The countries of the Sahel and West Africa are particularly stricken, as is the Horn of Africa which is enduring a devastating drought.

Vulnerable and marginalized groups are disproportionately affected by such crises. Women and youth, for example, are 14 times more likely than men to die during a disaster, and women constitute 80 percent of people displaced by climate change. With limited access to resources, social security, and services, the most vulnerable find it particularly hard to mitigate, adapt to and recover from climate shocks.

FAO and ARC share common objectives with regards to the integration of gender in disaster risk management and climate change actions. This includes building the institutional capacity of stakeholders to mainstream gender issues in workplans and policies, advocating for women's equal rights and women's empowerment in decision-making processes, and generating knowledge for better-informed local, national, and regional dialogues and policy-making, and providing gender-responsive early warning of the impacts of extreme weather events and food insecurity.

FAO is the lead UN agency working to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition around the world. ARC was established as a Specialized Agency of the African Union, to help its member countries improve their capacities to better plan, prepare and respond to extreme weather events and natural disasters. Currently, 35 African countries have agreed to collaborate with ARC to bolster their national disaster risk management.

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