



**POLICY DIALOGUE SERIES ON GENDER, DISASTER RISK  
REDUCTION, OUTBREAKS, EPIDEMICS AND FOOD SECURITY ON  
THE AFRICAN CONTINENT**

**4 – 5 JULY 2023**

**Addis Ababa-Ethiopia**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

In the last decades, disasters have struck with more frequency and intensity in all regions of the African continent, leaving in its wake the destruction of properties, loss of lives and livelihoods and food insecurity. Subsequently, evidence suggests that climatic disasters can exacerbate human pathogenic diseases, resulting in increased Outbreaks and Epidemics as changes in geographic distribution or ecological structure create new conditions for pathogens, giving them more opportunities to encounter susceptible hosts.<sup>1</sup>

Such disasters disproportionately impact gender and particular age groups: Women, older people, youth, children and people with disabilities. The rise of natural and climate-induced disasters on the African Continent is of great concern for these population categories. Mainstreaming gender in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policies and actions is, therefore, critical in strengthening the resilience of these vulnerable groups.

Building resilience in vulnerable groups must be addressed within the broader policy formulation and implementation context and reviewed to adapt the policies, strategies, programmes and plans to evolving complex contexts. In 2004 the AU developed the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ARSDRR). The ARSDRR argues that “part of the reason for the weak governance of disaster risk reduction institutions is the low level of gender sensitivity in disaster policies and programmes in addressing existing gender differences in vulnerabilities, disaster impacts, coping strategies and response measures”. The ARSDRR recommends expanding opportunities for women's participation in decision-making and leadership roles in managing disaster risk reduction organizations and programmes and promoting the use of formal guidelines on applying gender-mainstreaming tools in disaster risk reduction.

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<sup>1</sup> Agosta, S. J., Janz, N., & Brooks, D. R. (2010). How specialists can be generalists: Resolving the “parasite paradox” and implications for emerging infectious disease. *Zoologia (Curitiba)*, 27, 151–162.  
[https:// doi.org/10.1590/S1984 -4670201000 0200001](https://doi.org/10.1590/S1984-46702010000200001)



A new DRR political dispensation has been ushered in with the adoption of the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030. The African Union developed the Africa Programme of Action (PoA) to implement the ARSDRR and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The PoA states that “gender, age, disability and culture should be integrated into all policies and practices, and women and youth leadership promoted in this context”. Further, the African Union, through its first strategy for gender equality and women empowerment, highlights the need to build on global and continental commitments to gender into AU political positions, programmes and activities on disaster, humanitarian action, risk mitigation, migration and Conference of the Parties (COP) Plan of Action for women.

An initiative of the African Union’s Heads of State and Government, the African Risk Capacity (ARC), a specialised agency of the African Union established to help African governments improve their capacities to better plan, prepare, and respond to extreme weather events, natural disasters and public health emergencies, has, as part of its principles of engagement, adopted a differentiated approach to issues of gender equality in DRM. ARC is committed to closing the gender gap, which is central to achieving aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 of an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of its people, especially its women and youth and caring for its children, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, thus recognizes that the critical role of women in agriculture and in epidemic and disaster response is essential for food security and economic growth.

In the same framework, ARC is operationalising the Global Network against Food Crises, contributing to ending hunger in countries at risk of food crises through a joint programme implemented in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) with the financial support of the European Union. An essential focus of the programme includes strengthening the capacities of different actors through policy dialogue and advocacy on DRM in the targeted countries, regional bodies, and at the continental level.

ARC also recognises that Gender, Disasters Risk Reduction (DRM) and food security are both interlinked and cross cutting development issues, that without successfully addressing these issues, it is difficult to build resilience of nations and communities. ARC thus developed its Gender Strategy, which was adopted in September 2019. The Gender Strategy aims to transform Disaster Risk Management (DRM) approaches to ensure gender equality for vulnerable women and men in ARC Member States.

## **2. THE GENDER AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT PLATFORM: LEAD TO HOST THE POLICY SERIES**

In May 2021, the African Union Commission’s Directorate of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy under the Department for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable



Environment – represented by the DRR Unit under the Directorate of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (SEBE); the AUC’s Directorate of Women, Gender & Youth (AU WGYD); and the African Risk Capacity (ARC), a Specialised Agency of the African Union (AU), established the Gender and Disaster Risk Management Platform (GDRMP) to ensure the integration of Gender equality and women empowerment issues in the disaster risk management and financing landscape.

Since its establishment, the Platform has contributed to the development and management of knowledge on the issues of gender and DRM in the continent. In this line, the GDRM organised a pre-conference on the margins of the 8<sup>th</sup> Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Nairobi in November 2021. The pre-conference was themed: “Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction/Management in times of Covid-19”.

As part of knowledge development, the preconference shared knowledge on the dynamics influencing gender equality and women empowerment during COVID-19 and how to create innovative mechanisms and smart partnerships in the context of Gender and DRR/M.

At the pre-conference, policy dialogue and advocacy were promoted towards developing a gender transformative fund that will empower vulnerable groups in the context of Gender and DRR/M and advocacy for policy coherence for gender and disaster risk reduction/management.

An essential outcome of the 8<sup>th</sup> Regional Platform on DRR was the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration, asking Member States and Regional Economic Communities to increase the annual budgetary allocation, as well as to establish innovative financing solutions, including by participating in the Africa Risk Capacity’s innovative risk pooling mechanism, for the implementation of gender-sensitive and inclusive disaster risk reduction strategies, programmes and plans of action, in coherence with climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, combating desertification, management of food crises and sustainable development actions and Great Green Wall initiative at all levels.

Another significant outcome of the 8<sup>th</sup> Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was the adoption of the Matrix of the Programme of Action (Phase II: 2021-2025) to Implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in line with the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. In addition, as part of operationalising the Gender and DRM Platform, the African Union Commission and the African Risk Capacity will aim to increase Gender Sensitive DRM Policies, producing at least one gender-sensitive policy per year per member state.

In this perspective, the African Risk Capacity has produced gender-sensitive DRM policy briefs in two member states, namely Zimbabwe and Malawi. The next phase is the push to adopt gender-sensitive policies in the countries mentioned above.

The Gender and DRM Platform is tasked to:

- “Address the research and development gap in gender and disaster risk management and financing in Africa by engaging in studies, collection and analyses of gender-disaggregated data, impact assessments, and publication of best practices, among others.
- Serve as a medium for stakeholders to increase their know-how regarding the practical steps for gender mainstreaming in DRM.
- raise awareness of gender perspectives in DRM and to
- To be a mechanism for policy dialogue and advocacy on gender transformative DRM approaches geared towards adopting a gender transformative ‘culture of insurance’ by the Member States”.

It is against this backdrop and under its auspices that the Gender and Disaster Risk Management Platform (G& DRMP), which is a joint initiative of the African Union Commission and African Risk Capacity, is organising a series of policy dialogues to discuss the multidimensional impact of disasters and food security on gender on the African continent. The series will be inaugurated at an annual event aiming to sensitise African policymakers on the need to ensure gender-transformative DRM approaches, including adopting a culture of insurance, thereby making budgetary provisions for annual insurance uptake. It would also encourage policymakers to pursue disaggregated DRM approaches that consider the needs of young girls and women with disabilities since they are more vulnerable to the impacts of climatic and public health disasters and food security.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE SERIES OF POLICY DIALOGUE**

The main objective is to sustainably engage policymakers in the African continent on the need to strengthen policy measures for a more significant impact on matters of Gender equality, DRM, Health emergencies, and food security.

The specific objectives of the policy dialogue series are:

- 1) To sensitise policy makers on the African continent on the need to transform DRM approaches to attain gender equality for vulnerable women and men in Africa.
- 2) To sensitise policymakers on the African continent on the interlinkages between climate disasters, health, including epidemic outbreaks, food security, and the associated gender implications.
- 3) To share experiences and lessons learnt on the implementation of gender & DRM and food security from ARC Member States

- 4) To reflect on the importance of strengthening monitoring systems and predictive analysis for additional, more frequent and qualitative updates on food crises
- 5) To identify ways to operationalise the Plan of Action (Phase II: 2021-2025) to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
- 6) To discuss policy options to implement the Nairobi Declaration, which calls for Member States and RECs to increase the annual budgetary allocation and establish innovative financing solutions for implementing gender-sensitive and inclusive disaster risk reduction strategies, programmes and action plans.

#### **4. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- 1) Strengthened capacity of ARC and AUC Member countries on Gender, natural disaster risk management, public health policy and food security.
- 2) Efforts, success stories, and case studies are documented, and lessons learnt are shared for a more prepared and resilient Africa we want.
- 3) A preventive approach in addressing food crises from a food system perspective adopted
- 4) Strategies for implementing PoA of the Sendai Framework reviewed, including clear paths to operationalise the Gender and DRM Platform.
- 5) Mechanisms for increased budget allocation for gender-sensitive, multi-disciplinary and inclusive DRR identified.
- 6) Policy brief to inform decision-making across the Continent on Gender, natural disaster risk management, Health and food security published

#### **5. SUGGESTED MAIN THEMATIC AREAS**

The proposed event, which is the first in the series, will be organised around five panels that will provide insight and open up discussions on

- 1) Gender, DRM/F and Food Security
- 2) Gender, Women Leadership and Food Security
- 3) Public Health Emergencies, Gender, DRM/F and Food Security
- 4) Women in Insurance
- 5) Partnership in enhancing gender integration in DRM, O&E and food security

#### **6. PARTICIPANTS**

Participants will be drawn from influential policy and decision makers, experts, and other key programme and institution representatives who have valuable information and can make commitments towards advancing agreed recommendations. They include:

1. High-Level Government officials from Member States
2. AUC: ARBE-SEBE (DRR Unit), Gender and Health directorates,



3. AU member states are represented by one representative each from the Ministry in charge of Health, Gender and Women's Affairs and the Ministry in charge of Disaster Risk Management.
4. Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) group and its Member States represented by the above ministries.
5. Representatives from partner organisations and institutions, including the international organisations and development partners, Global and continental institutions such as AfDB, Embassy of Canada at the AU, IFAD, UNDRR, UNECA, UNOCHA, WFP, UN Women, FAO, IFC/ WB and others that are engaged into building resilience on and preparedness to natural disaster risk management across Africa, through direct actions, advocacy, and resource mobilisation.
6. Think tanks, academia, media, private sector, representatives from Research institutes, etc.
7. Representatives of the Africa Science and Technology Advisory Group on Disaster Risk Reduction (AfSTAG-DRR)
8. Representatives from the PERI\_PERI- U
9. Representatives of the Africa Youth Advisory Board on DRR (AYAB-DRR)
10. Representatives from umbrella CSOs and women's rights organisations under the auspices of the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC)
11. African Union female parliamentarians
12. Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) such as ECOWAS, EAC and SADC, IGAD, etc.
13. AU Organs: The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC)

## **7. FREQUENCY AND FORMAT**

This inaugural event of the policy dialogue series will be held face-to-face. RECs and in-country policy dialogues shall be organised twice a year and will inform the continental dialogue. In case urgent issues arise, an ad hoc dialogue can be scheduled to tackle the pertaining business matter. The bi-annual dialogues and ad hoc dialogues will be held virtually.

It is hoped that ensuing declarations from such fora would feed into relevant regional and global events and processes.

8. **PROPOSED VENUE:** Getfam Hotel, Addis Ababa,
9. **DATES:** The inaugural session will take place on 4-5 July 2023.

**10. AGENDA: A draft agenda is proposed below:**

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# AGENDA

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| Day One – Tuesday 4 July 2023                      |                         |  |  |  |
|--|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| Time   | Session                 | Expected results   | Suggested methods/Approach   | Responsible  |
| 08:30 – 9:00                                       | Arrival of participants |  |  | ARC/AUC  |
| 09:00 – 09:30                                      | Opening Session         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting the scene</li> <li>Strengthened collaboration with AUC</li> </ul> |  | <b>Facilitator – Babatunde Iyanda, ARC</b>   |
|  |                         |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Opening Remarks</b></li> </ul> | Ibrahima Cheikh Diong, Director General, African Risk Capacity Group   |
|  |                         |  | <b>Opening statement</b>   | Representative of Dr. Sithembiso G Nyoni, Hon Minister of Women’s Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Zimbabwe: ( <i>Ms. Lillian Takaendisa Chief Director: Gender, Policy planning and Programme Management Ministry of Women affairs, Community, SMEs, Development: Zimbabwe</i> ) |
|  |                         |  | <b>Welcome/Keynote Speech:</b>   | Representative of Her Excellency Ambassador Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, African Union Commission   |
| <b>09:30 – 10:00 Family Photo and Coffee break</b> |                         |  |  |  |
| 10:00 – 10:15                                      |                         |  | GDRMP video  |  |



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| <p>10:15 – 11:30</p> | <p><b>Panel discussion 1:</b><br/>Gender, DRM/F &amp; Food Security</p>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarity with gender sensitive policies in DRM/F and food security</li> <li>• Common framework on disaster risk management and financing</li> </ul> <p>Shared understanding of government policies, programmes, and initiatives on DRM</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What is the status of gender, integration in DRM and food security from your country/organization’s view?</b></li> <li>• <b>What policy interventions would you recommend strengthening gains and overcome challenges identified?</b></li> </ul> | <p><b>Facilitator: ARC Gender Advisor, Dr. Christiana George</b></p> <p>Representative of Mr. Harsen Nyambe, Director Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (SEBE) Department, African Union Commission</p> <p>Representative of Ms. Ngwenya Nonkululeko Prudence<br/>Director Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD)-AUC (<i>Dr. Tapiwa Uchizi Nyasulu Rweyemamu, Head of Women and Gender Policy and Development, AUC</i>)</p> <p>Mr. Kenneth Chaula<br/>Gender Expert-ADRFi Malawi</p> <p>Ms. Blessing Fambisai,<br/>Ministry of Finances, Zimbabwe</p> <p>Ms. Niandonirina Johanesa,<br/>ADRFi Gender Expert– Madagascar</p> <p>Mr. Canaan Samhembere,<br/>Programme Officer Family AIDS Caring Trust (FACT): Zimbabwe</p> |
| <p>11:30– 13:00</p>  | <p><b>Panel discussion 2:</b><br/><i>Gender, Women leadership &amp; Food Security</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the best practices in the status of women in African agri-food systems</li> <li>• What are the implications on climate</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Facilitator: Dr. Tapiwa Uchizi Nyasulu Rweyemamu, Head of Women and Gender Policy and Development, AUC</b></p>  |

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|  |  |   | <p>and disaster risk management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the Policy measures that can be taken to enhance the status of African Women in agriculture?</li> </ul>  | <p>Ms. Nomathemba Mhlanga<br/>Agribusiness Officer<br/>FAO-SFE</p> <p>Mr. Papa Demba Diaw<br/>Programme Coordinator - Humanitarian, Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction.<br/>UN Women</p> <p>Dr Mariame Maiga:<br/>CORAF</p> <p>Ms. Mariam Akiror:<br/>Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships<br/>Coordinator Action Against Hunger USA-Uganda Office (EWA)</p> |
| 13:00 – 14:00                          | <b>Lunch break</b>   |   |  | All   |
| 14:00 - 15:00                          | <p><b>Panel discussion 3:</b></p> <p>Public health emergencies, gender and food security</p> | <p>Strengthened DRM systems through capacity building on public health policies and food security</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do health crises or public health emergencies contribute to food insecurity?</li> <li>• And how does it impact differently to men and women?</li> <li>• How can the differentiated impacts be mitigated from a policy perspective?</li> </ul> | <p><b>Facilitator: ARC O&amp;E Ms. Siphokazi Mnguni</b></p> <p>Ms. Anne Nakinsige<br/>Ministry of Health-Uganda</p> <p>Rita Missal: Global Recovery Advisor, UNDP</p>   |
| 15:00 – 16:00                          | Q&A  | <p><b>Deep dive into the presentations and take-home message</b></p>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Facilitator: Gatkuoth Kai, Head of DRR, SEBE, AUC</b></p>   |
| 16:00                                  | <b>Close of day 1</b>  |   |  |   |
| <b>Day two – Wednesday 5 July 2023</b> |  |   |  |   |
| <b>Time</b>                            | <b>Session</b>   | <b>Expected results</b>   | <b>Suggested methods/Approach</b>  | <b>Responsible</b>  |
| 08:30 – 09:00                          | Arrival of Participants  |   |  | ARC/AUC   |
| 09:00 – 09:30                          | Recap of day One   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting the scene</li> </ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of main conclusions and</li> </ul>  | Rapporteur  |

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|----------------------|--|--|---|--|
|                      |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smooth transition from day 1 to day 2 working agenda</li> </ul> | recommendations of Day 1  |  |
| 09:30 – 10:45        | <b>Panel discussion 4</b><br><i>Women in Insurance</i>     | Enhanced coping mechanisms for women in the context of DRM, Food security                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the effective financial mechanisms available in your country/programme to ensure Women’s economic empowerment and financial inclusion in the event of disasters and climate change</li> <li>What are the challenges?</li> <li>What are the policy measures needed to address them?</li> </ul> | <p><b>Facilitator: Lorraine Njue, Head of Actuarial at African Risk Capacity (ARC) Ltd</b></p> <p>Ronald Phiri: Deputy Director<br/>Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare</p> <p>Ms. Niandonirina Johanesa –ADRFi<br/>Gender Expert – Madagascar</p> <p>Ms. Patty Karuaihe-Martin, Managing Director Namib Re</p> <p>Representative of Ms. Ngwenya Nonkululeko Prudence<br/>Director Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD)-AUC</p> <p>Vincent Kabiru, Nanap Venture and Insurance Agency</p> |
| <b>10:45 – 11:00</b> | <b>Health Break</b>  |  |   |  |
| 11:00 – 12:00        | <b>Panel discussion 5: Partnership in enhancing gender</b> | Enhanced relationship with partners and key stakeholders.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can sustainable financial and technical partnerships be built in</li> </ul>  | <b>Facilitator: Gilbert Kayitare</b><br><b>ARC: Programme Policy Consultant &amp; EU Projects Manager</b>  |

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|               | <b>integration in DRM, O&amp;E and food security</b> |  | <p>addressing Gender, DRM and food security gaps on the African continent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the policy measures that need to be enhanced or put in place?</li> </ul> | <p>Lara Bremner, Counsellor (Development) / Head of Cooperation, Pan-Africa and Regional Development, Global Affairs Canada</p> <p>Carsterns Mulume: Caritas- Malawi</p> <p>Dr. Gountiéni D. Lankoandé, GRAAD Think Tank</p> |
| 12:00 – 12:30 | Summary of Policy recommendations                    |  |  | <b>Facilitator: Boroto Ntakobajira: ARC Gender Expert</b>  |
| 12:30 – 13:00 | Closing session                                      |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AU DRR</li> <li>• ARC Member State</li> </ul>   | Facilitator: Tapiwa & Kai  |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | <b>Lunch break</b>                                   |  |  |  |
| 14:00 – 16:00 | Housekeeping   |  |  | Admin/ ARC   |