

Guidelines for Disaster Prevention and
Reconstruction
from a Gender Equality Perspective
(Summary)

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<Background>

- During the Great East Japan Earthquake, there were shortages of sanitary and daily necessities; breast-feeding and changing facilities for women were not provided, and women were forced to carry out tasks of preparing meals and cleaning from stereotypical perceptions of traditional gender roles in evacuation sites.
- It is crucial for persons concerned to understand disaster response from a gender equality perspective in daily life.

<Using These Guidelines>

- Presenting basic articles, based upon disaster experiences of the past, to be used as guiding principles for local governments to take actions and respond from a gender equality perspective in prevention, emergency, recovery and reconstruction, and other stages.
- Expecting local governments to draw up or revise local disaster management plans, shelter management manuals, and so on, to draw up guidelines or manuals individually, and to establish organizations for disaster prevention and reconstruction from a gender equality perspective.
- Being available for reference to volunteer fire or flood brigades, welfare and child commissioners, community disaster prevention organizations, NPOs, NGOs, community groups, companies, universities, and other organizations that engage in disaster prevention or reconstruction activities.
- Providing an instruction handbook with checklists and casebook.

<Disseminating the Guidelines>

Notifying local governments of the guideline and holding meetings, with disaster management departments.

<Fundamental Concepts>

- 1 Promotion of gender equality from daily business is a bedrock of measures on disaster prevention and reconstruction.
- 2 Women should be considered an important resource.
- 3 Gender differences in degree of impact by disaster should be considered.
- 4 Safety and security should be ensured by respect for human rights of both men and women.
- 5 Gender equality should be promoted in collaboration between the private and public sectors.
- 6 The tasks of gender equality centers and departments of gender equality should be clearly defined.
- 7 The response to the persons in need of protection in disaster should be noted.

<Actions To Be Taken At Each Stage>

1 Preparations and Prevention

- In disaster prevention departments, the gender ratio of the staff should, at a minimum, be close to that of the overall staff, and employment and promotion of female public officials, including promotion to managerial position, should be accelerated.
- The proportion of women on Regional Disaster Management Councils should be increased to take a gender equality perspective into account for disaster prevention measures.
- Participation in the policy decision-making by women should be promoted and gender equality perspective should be taken into account in the process of drawing up or revising Regional Disaster Management plans.
- A certain amount of daily necessities for women and infants should be stored in advance, and should be supplied and transported immediately after the occurrence of disasters, under the agreement with organizations or companies relating to storage, transport, convenience stores and supermarkets.
- Learning opportunities for residents, regardless of sex, age or other factors, should be provided for the consideration of the disaster response from a gender equality perspective, such as workshops and other forms of hands-on learning.
- Participation by women in volunteer disaster prevention organizations should be encouraged, and women leaders should be fostered to increase the number of women leaders in the organizations.

2 Urgent Response Post Disaster

- Expecting and nursing mothers and parents with infants often take a long time to evacuate and require protection. Therefore, there should be guidance and assistance for their evacuation to secure places in cooperation with the related organizations, voluntary disaster prevention organizations, neighborhoods, and so on.
- Assistance with child rearing or nursing care should be provided soon after the occurrence of a disaster so that government officials and company employees, who are responsible for rearing or caring for their families, could immediately engage in rescue and relief, and medical and fire fighting activities.
- Temporary evacuation sites, especially those provided by commercial facilities or universities around railway stations under agreements, will be expected to take numerous people who are unable to go home. There should be gender segregated spaces, as well as common spaces, in those sites.

3 Evacuation Sites

- Facilities for women, such as breast feeding rooms and sexually segregated toilets, clothe drying spaces, changing rooms and rest facilities should be provided when setting up evacuating sites. Temporary toilets for women tend to be more crowded than the ones for men, so it is recommended to construct more temporary toilets for women.
- There should be both female and male administrator(s) in each evacuation site.
- Gender equality should be promoted in self-governing administrative organizations by evacuees, and the percentage of women managers, such as leaders or deputy leaders, should be 30 percent at least, as a target.
- Sanitary items, underwear, and other daily necessities for women should be distributed respectfully in privacy by female staff, and should be supplied in women's rest facilities, toilets, and so on.
- To prevent violence against women and children, safety and security should be ensured by patrolling sleeping rooms and women's rest facilities, by distributing personal alarms, and so on. In addition, measures to create an environment for intolerance of violence and appropriate response for victims should be conducted without exception.

4 Temporary Housing

- To prevent evacuees from being isolated, and to facilitate their communication, meeting facilities should be provided and the management of the facilities should be supported.
- In temporary housing complexes, establishment of residents' associations or other community organizations should be encouraged, and the percentage of women executives of the organizations, such as president and deputies, should be over 30 percent, as a target.
- Visiting consultations for evacuees, dwelling in temporary houses or similar facilities, should be made by health care workers and other specialists, and life assistant workers consisting of both women and men. Through those activities, efforts should be made to find and solve the problems that evacuees are facing.
- Under different circumstances, women evacuated in the temporary houses often feel anxiety and suffer from stress. In addition, fear of violence against women, among other problems, is tantamount. Therefore, consultation services and instructions to prevent violence against women should be widely disseminated, in collaboration with centers for gender equality and private organizations.
- The mental isolation of men, who tend to avoid expressing their problems, may also arise as an issue. Therefore, consultation organizations should be set up and carefully disseminated.

5 Recovery and Reconstruction

- In the process of drawing up reconstruction plans, participation in the policy decision-making by women should be promoted and Gender Equality perspective should be adopted in the plans.
- The environment for concluding opinions of residents should be carefully considered. Holding meetings by women, for example, may enable residents to make proposals from their point of view as local residents.
- In the process of building public housing for evacuees, participation of women should be promoted during the planning and design stages, and their opinions should be taken into account in building houses. In addition, facilities for resident meetings and other events must be built to facilitate communication between evacuees.
- Employment opportunities for women should be provided, in implementing policies on creation of urgent temporary employment, and providing mid to long term permanent employment with providing capacity building of employees through vocational training to provide employment for disaster victims.
- Centers for Gender Equality will be expected to assist disaster victims, by means of providing information from gender equality perspectives, holding consultations, and acting as bases for activities by NGOs and other volunteer organizations concerning issues of gender equality. This is addition to their usual tasks, such as consultation, providing information, public relations, and enlightenment activities, in collaboration with departments of local governments and local people and organizations.

6 Assistance for Evacuation Far and Wide

- In case of the evacuation of victims suffering from massive disasters distant from their homes, women are expected to accompany their children. Therefore, studies to determine the needs of those women should be conducted and measures should be taken for them, if necessary.

7 Enlightenment and Assistance for Supporters at Each Stage.

- Information on the prevention of violence against women is necessary, and must be disseminated from a gender equal perspective to private organizations and volunteer groups, prior to the start of activities in disaster suffering area.

8 Collect Gender Segregating Data

- To implement policies on the prevention of disaster and reconstruction from a gender equality perspective, it is important to know objectively the situation of women and men, from data collection. Therefore, it is recommended to collect gender-segregating data on disaster victims, and disaster responding personnel in case of disaster.