

**Submission from Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific
an NGO with special consultative status with ECOSOC**

on the

**Draft General Recommendation 35 on the Gender related dimensions of Disaster Risk
reduction in a Changing Climate.**

Section IV

Paragraph 19

While “should ensure” sounds positive there is little elsewhere in the document to check that this will be implemented or that nations will be held accountable.

Paragraph 25: “concrete, targeted and measurable steps” presumably are determined by individual countries. This presupposes data availability to establish a base line from which to measure .How is this possible when countries lack this information or effective resources to establish it? Greater mention should be made of capacity building and development to establish infrastructure that will enable governments to achieve baseline data to achieve, and then measure, improvement. (2013 GA resolution 68/227)

Sub points (a) to (d) require data and need measurement to achieve success and effectiveness.

Sub point (e) speaking of eliminating discriminatory laws and practices does not effectively address the impact of interpretation of religious, cultural and traditional norms such as patriarchy upon both females and males and how this can impact upon reactions to disasters. There is strong evidence that males can undertake risky behaviour as a result of societal expectations and experiences. ¹

Paragraph 30

While agreeing with the importance of these points it would be useful to strengthen the emphasis upon women’s groups and civil society as in some countries, for example Fiji, these sectors have been working on educating women for leadership and about the impacts of climate change for some time. They have valuable contacts, credibility and sound knowledge. They would provide effective egress into different women’s groups across the nation.

Section V

Paragraph 33

This section is vital and its importance in providing base line data cannot be exaggerated. It is also vital in terms of measuring the success of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, despite significant assistance in aid programmes from external governments and the various UN agencies, for many of the nations most affected by climate change this is still a new area. Emphasise capacity building programmes to improve local data collection and achieve full understanding of key indicators used in data assessment.

Paragraph 34

¹ Bradshaw, S Women, Poverty and Disaster: exploring the links through Hurricane Mitch In Nicaragua. In: Chant, S ed. The International Handbook of Gender and Poverty. Edward Elgar Publishing 2010

It is important that the collection of data is by an internationally recognised process to ensure consistency and continuity. The Individual Deprivation Measure, (IDM) for example, would be an effective comparative analysis of how different women experience poverty and risk in different ways and would provide a way of determining the most effective policy.

Paragraph 36

Here again, the ability to access internationally recognised procedures and processes would be useful and cost effective.

Number (d) does imply a secure economy. How does a nation which has experienced devastating destruction, loss of life, loss of housing, schools unusable, destruction of crops and livelihoods and limited supplies to undertake reconstruction, such as Fiji with Cyclone Winston, balance adequate resources for programmes against the need to meet basic human rights for its people?

Paragraph 38

Given problems such as outlined in comments about paragraph 36 above it might be useful here to strengthen references to private/public partnership possibilities and to refer to civil society organisations again.

(e) Highlights some potential difficulties by stating that “state parties should ensure” the gender and women’s rights perspective in programmes of other entities. There is a big difference between ensuring that issues are incorporated and ensuring that they are honoured as shown in Paragraph 39 and 40.

Paragraph 39

This paragraph includes the words, “They must be participatory, gender-responsive and subjected to continuous human rights-based monitoring and evaluation.” Is this the states responsibility? If businesses are failing to do this what is a state able to do effectively? Does it require a jurisprudence aspect?

Paragraph 40

(a)Speaks of “conducive environments” for business. How will human rights concerns be balanced against a business’s need to secure a profit? Experience around the world has shown that individuals tend to lose out. Easy and cheap access to appeals and justice will be vital.

Paragraph 42 (d) while education has a vital role to play it has been shown that it is most effective if included in schools as early as possible. It would be useful to indicate this in the statement.

Paragraph 44

The “extension of Internet and mobile telephone coverage” is commendable but severe storms can seriously disrupt these systems. In both Fiji and Bangladesh for example community radio networks have been valuable for disseminating warnings and learning of disaster impact in more remote regions. The need is to promote reliable and cost effective systems.

Paragraph 61

It is important here to recognise the impact of disaster on men's employment and the likely impact this will have on other issues such as food security and violence against women and families. There is considerable intersectionality here.

Paragraph 64 (c)

This implies known information about conditions for rural women which may not be the case and underpins the need for accurate data collection (SADD) to be a priority in many countries.

Paragraph 70 (c) and (d)

Strengthening partnerships between government and civil society as indicated earlier is vital for this. It should not just be with the large international organisations but more with local women's organisations who have a better knowledge of local issues and concerns and who will be there in the long term

Paragraph 71

Does the listing suggest a priority? Certainly regular reporting is needed but it may be useful for some suggestions about priority issues for all nations. What mechanisms exist to ensure that this is done? Every 10 years is regular but it would be rather pointless.