



Plenary Session
2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Statement by
Dr. Natalia Kanem
Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA

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Your Excellency President Enrique Peña Nieto,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Two years ago when the Sendai framework was adopted, a woman named Alimanda awoke to the roar of floodwater rushing into her home.

She roused her four children and hurried them into a nearby tree.

As the water rose around her, she struggled to climb into its branches. She was eight months pregnant.

She shouted into the darkness for help, and was eventually rescued by canoe.

Ferried to safety, she saw how the floods had wiped out crops and livestock, washed away roads, and left her community homeless.

Yet for Aliminda, the ordeal was just beginning.

Amid the wreckage, and with four small children – ages 4, 5, 6 and 7 – she still had to find a way to give birth safely.

This true story happened in Malawi, but it could have just as easily happened here in Mexico or in any of our countries.

Alimanda was lucky. She found care in her time of need and she and her baby girl and other 4 children survived.

But other women are not so lucky. Today and every day, more than 500 women die during pregnancy and childbirth in countries that are affected by humanitarian crises and fragility.

We are here today in Cancun to make sure that women like Alimanda and her children are not left behind as a hurricane hits, an earthquake strikes or floods rage.

At the heart of the Sendai Framework is the well-being of people, particularly those who are marginalized.

Article 30 of the framework calls for inclusive policies and social safety nets woven together with livelihood programmes, and access to basic health care services including sexual and reproductive health.

These programmes are life-saving for pregnant women like Alimanda.

Women do not choose to get pregnant or give birth when a crisis hits.

And without proper nutrition, hygiene and maternal health care, their lives and the lives of their newborns and other children are put at higher risk.

Today 60 per cent of preventable maternal deaths and 53 per cent of deaths of children under five take place in humanitarian and fragile settings.

And studies show that 1 in 5 displaced women and girls have experienced gender-based violence, including human trafficking and sexual violence, which requires comprehensive services, support and medical care.

With rising natural disasters comes rising concerns for the most vulnerable—women and girls, people living with a disability, young children and the elderly.

The recent widespread drought in the Horn of Africa is already having a devastating impact on women and

adolescent girls. Maternal malnutrition is resulting in an increase of miscarriages, premature or low-birth weight babies, and postpartum hemorrhage. We are witnessing severe anemia during pregnancy which is linked to increased maternal death and disability. The situation is more severe in rural and underserved areas where access to family planning services is also affected.

Together we must ensure that women and girls' voices are heard to reduce disaster risks as witnessed in the recent heat waves and the floods in Peru, Colombia and Ecuador. We must ensure that effective plans, supplies and programmes are put in place, funds are allocated, and progress is monitored.

From commitments to action

Disaster Risk Reduction is a priority of UNFPA and we have three areas of focus.

First, we support data collection and analysis; second, we support sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence programming; and third we support the active engagement of women and youth.

Our rapid assessment and data collection during emergencies helps guide crisis response and informs

effective policies to mitigate hazards and risks in the future by building back better.

Together with National Statistical Offices, UNFPA strengthens subnational population projection, vulnerability analysis and mapping, and establishment of protocols for data management and geospatial analysis for disaster preparedness.

UNFPA supports countries in monitoring the implementation of the Sendai Framework and other frameworks including for the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the New Urban Agenda.

UNFPA strengthens capacity on risk analysis and monitoring, and prioritizes a set of minimum preparedness actions.

In addition, UNFPA strengthens partnerships for increased financing for DRR and risk sensitive investment in sexual and reproductive health programming through the Minimum Initial Service Package for reproductive health in emergencies and the pre-positioning of medical supplies.

To address gender-based violence, UNFPA is guided by the Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies. Emphasis is placed on identifying potential GBV risks and vulnerable groups through gender-sensitive assessments and putting in place risk mitigation measures before the onset of an emergency. UNFPA plays a lead role in supporting the implementation of the inter-agency Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action in key sectors.

UNFPA advocates putting the empowerment of youth at the centre of forward-looking, future-oriented Disaster Risk Management. In close cooperation with IFRC, UNFPA proposes to use the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action to both strengthen engagement of youth and support youth leadership. Having young people fully appreciate the benefits of Disaster Risk Management will in turn benefit their social development, sense of purpose and participation in the labor market, particularly with private sector companies.

Finally, UNFPA has been working with partners to create connections between population and climate change adaptation and to integrate population-based disaster risk reduction processes into countries' national climate change adaptation planning.

At UNFPA, we are convinced that the 2017 Global Platform needs to place concrete and lasting action on DRR by strategically investing in long-term inclusive and people-centered resilience-building - through uninterrupted provision of quality sexual and reproductive health services, by increasing the availability of sex and age disaggregated data required for planning, and through systems, policies, mechanisms and services to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and protect the health, rights and dignity of people.

Thank you.