

**United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) inputs for the 14th session of the
Open-ended Working Group on Ageing**

Focus Area: Social Inclusion

A core aspect of the Sendai Framework's commitment to an all-of-society engagement is a broad-based participation in the risk management process. The frequency and severity of climate and disaster risks, coupled with an increasingly ageing population amplify the vulnerability of older persons to the risks of disasters. This is set to worsen and put the lives and livelihoods of older people at risk, as projections show that the world is to face 560 medium- to large-scale disasters per year – or 1.5 a day, by 2030. The vulnerability of older persons affects their capacity to cope with and recover from extreme events such as heatwaves, winter storms, wildfires, flooding, hurricanes and cyclones, air pollution, and droughts which lead to food and water insecurity.

Main findings and recommendations of the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 indicate that 'Governments need to recommit to ensure that multisectoral, multi-scalar and multi-stakeholder mechanisms are in place' and intersectionality be given prime consideration in the development of national disaster risk reduction strategies. Older persons as a group are disproportionately excluded from coverage of early warning and post-disaster recovery. The lack of meaningful participation and leadership of inter alia, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, gender-diverse persons and youth, continue to be excluded from DRR decision-making. This calls for stronger commitment to address the shortcomings of national disaster risk reduction policies, strategies and practices that recognize the specific vulnerabilities and needs of older persons, as well as acknowledge and fulfill their rights.

Full participation and leadership of older persons in disaster risk reduction are essential and their valuable contributions leveraged to enhance resilience and reduce vulnerabilities to ensure no one is left behind. Strengthened disaster risk governance is key to addressing inequality including based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, class and other forms of discrimination. While firm steps have been taken at some levels to address the inequalities and ensure inclusion of the groups at highest risk, it is evident that adopting an intersectional approach in disaster risk governance has not reached the key status it requires. This is partly due to lack of intersectionality in the design and implementation of disaster risk reduction activities where specific barriers for older persons has not been considered. Older persons possess a repository of knowledge systems, skills and wisdom which must be valued as a source of information on hazards, risk profiles and sustainable mitigation strategies.

A better understanding of the vulnerability and exposure of communities and sub-groups of the population is fundamental. To achieve this, enhanced commitment and capacity to develop disaggregated data sets can capture the differential experiences of disaster risk and disaster impacts across multiple indicators. This data should encompass age, gender, income, disability,

geographical subregion, and hazard type for both socioeconomic vulnerabilities and disaster-impacted populations. Lack of data has impacted the quality of analysis that informs policy formulation and intersectional approaches addressing multidimensional vulnerabilities through risk-informed social protection, social policies, and disaster risk reduction and climate action, as well as targeted approaches in disaster preparedness, including early warning and early action.

A checklist outlining fourteen minimum standards was developed to promote an inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction which responds to and addresses the needs of older persons^{1,2}:

MINIMUM STANDARDS
Older people are specifically mentioned in national disaster management and climate policies, requiring direct action in planning, budgeting and training.
Older people have been consulted in the development of national and local disaster and climate risk assessment and their vulnerabilities and capacities included.
Early warning signals and information are available, accessible, understandable and actionable by older people.
Evacuation plans at community level have specific actions to ensure older people can evacuate and are protected during these operations, including actions specific to mobility, sight, hearing and mental impairments and isolation.
Disaster supplies and stockpiles include specialist items, medication and food required by older people and are accessible to older people in emergency distributions.
Evacuation and rest centres are age responsive, with off-floor seating, wheelchair accessible facilities, handrails and privacy for men and women.
Sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data is collected including for the following older age groups: 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, and 80+ years in all disaster management and analysed in regard to the impact of all disaster risk reduction initiatives.
Emergency personnel in health, search and rescue, management, coordination and protection and livelihoods have been trained in working with older people and addressing their specific needs and strengths in emergencies.
Older people's knowledge, skills and contributions to disaster risk management are publicly acknowledged and promoted.
Older people have access to cash transfers and livelihood recovery initiatives following disasters.
Resilient and climate-smart livelihood initiatives are inclusive of people who continue to work into old age.
Older people are represented in DRR management and governance from the community to the national level to ensure that their voice is heard.
Social protection systems such as pensions are available and can be accessed within days of a disaster and utilised as emergency cash transfer mechanisms.
Older people have access to affordable disaster insurance and risk-transfer mechanisms.

¹ [Charter 14 for older people in disaster risk reduction: resilience for life | PreventionWeb](#)

² [MinimumStandards-AgeInclusiveDRR.pdf \(unisdr.org\)](#)