MAJOR REPORT

Gender in Civil-Military Climate Security and Disaster Response:
Co-Creating Gender-Transformative Approaches Amid the Global Climate Crisis

Cover image: Heri Mardinal

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KEY TERMS

Civil-Military Cooperation (Civ-Mil): Civil-military cooperation involves collaboration between civilian organizations and military forces in disaster response and other security-related activities. Effective civ-mil partnerships are crucial for ensuring coordinated and efficient responses to emergencies, leveraging the strengths of both sectors to enhance overall disaster management and resilience.

Civil Society Organization (CSO): Organizations that operate independently of the government and commercial sectors, such as charities, advocacy groups, community organizations, and grassroots movements.

Climate Adaptation: Strategies and actions taken to adjust and prepare for the effects of climate change.

Climate Resilience: The ability of communities, systems, or organizations to withstand, recover, and adapt to adverse events, such as natural disasters or climate change, while maintaining essential functions and structures.

Civil-Military Cooperation (Civ-Mil): Civil-military cooperation involves collaboration between civilian organizations and military forces in disaster response and other security-related activities. Effective civ-mil partnerships are crucial for ensuring coordinated and efficient responses to emergencies, leveraging the strengths of both sectors to enhance overall disaster management and resilience.

Civil Service Organizations (CSOs): Civil Service Organizations are non-profit, non-state, voluntary entities run on a local, national, or international level that essentially act as mediators between public authorities and citizens, often working towards advancing social change.

Climate Adaptation: Strategies and actions taken to adjust and prepare for the effects of climate change, reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience to its impacts on communities, economies, and ecosystems.

Climate Resilience: The ability of communities, systems, or organizations to withstand, recover, and adapt to adverse events, such as natural disasters or climate change, while maintaining essential functions and structures.

Climate Security: The intersection of climate change and security, emphasizing the impacts of climate change on global, national, and human security, including the potential for conflict and displacement.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR): Strategies and practices aimed at reducing the risks and impacts of natural and human-made disasters through prevention, mitigation, and preparedness.

Gender Perspective: An approach that considers the different impacts of policies, programs, and actions on people based on their gender, aiming to promote gender equality and address gender-specific needs and vulnerabilities.

Gender-Transformative: Approaches that seek to address and alter the underlying power structures and social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities, promoting gender equity and the empowerment of all genders, particularly women and girls.

Gender-Responsive: A gender-responsive approach looks to adapt interventions to better suit the needs of different genders, yet may not necessarily deeply challenge existing gender norms or power structures.

Human Security: Human security is a people-centered approach that focuses on protecting individuals from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression, as well as sudden disruptions like natural disasters and conflicts. It emphasizes the importance of addressing the root causes of insecurity and promoting human well-being through comprehensive and preventive measures.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR): Operations conducted by military and/or civilian agencies to provide aid and relief in the aftermath of natural or human-made disasters, aiming to save lives, alleviate suffering, and reduce economic and social impacts. Can include emergency services, medical aid, reconstruction, and more.

Inclusive Approaches: Strategies and practices that ensure the participation and consideration of all groups, especially marginalized and vulnerable populations such as women, in decision-making processes.

Intersectional Gender Perspective: An analytical framework that examines how various social identities (e.g., gender, race, class) intersect and influence experiences of discrimination and privilege, ensuring that diverse needs and vulnerabilities are addressed in policy and practice.

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Intersectional Gender Perspective: An analytical framework that examines how various social identities (e.g., gender, race, class) intersect and influence experiences of discrimination and privilege, ensuring that diverse needs and vulnerabilities are addressed in policy and practice.

MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning): A comprehensive framework used in project and program management to assess performance, ensure accountability, and facilitate learning and improvement through systematic data collection and analysis.

Population Displacement: The forced movement of people from their homes due to factors such as natural disasters, famine, disease, or conflict.

Resilience: The ability of individuals, communities, and systems to anticipate, withstand, and recover from adverse events and conditions, such as natural disasters or climate change impacts.

Resource Scarcity: When the availability of essential resources becomes limited relative to demand.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV): Harmful acts perpetrated against a person based on socially ascribed gender differences, including acts of causing physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, or threats of such acts, and other deprivations of liberty.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations to address various social, economic, and environmental challenges by 2030.

Structural Change: A keyword in gender-transformative programming that emphasizes the need for sustained investments over time in gender transformation to change individual agency, gender norms, roles, and structural power dynamics, as well as legislative and institutional structures.

Triple Nexus: The triple nexus in this context refers to the intersection of gender, climate change, and security. It emphasizes the importance of understanding how gender dynamics influence and are influenced by climate change and security issues. A comprehensive approach to addressing these interconnected challenges requires integrating gender perspectives into climate security and disaster response policies.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325, The WPS (Women, Peace, and Security) Agenda: An international policy framework that emphasizes the importance of women's participation and leadership in peace and security processes, promoting gender equality and addressing the distinct impacts of conflict and disaster on women and girls.
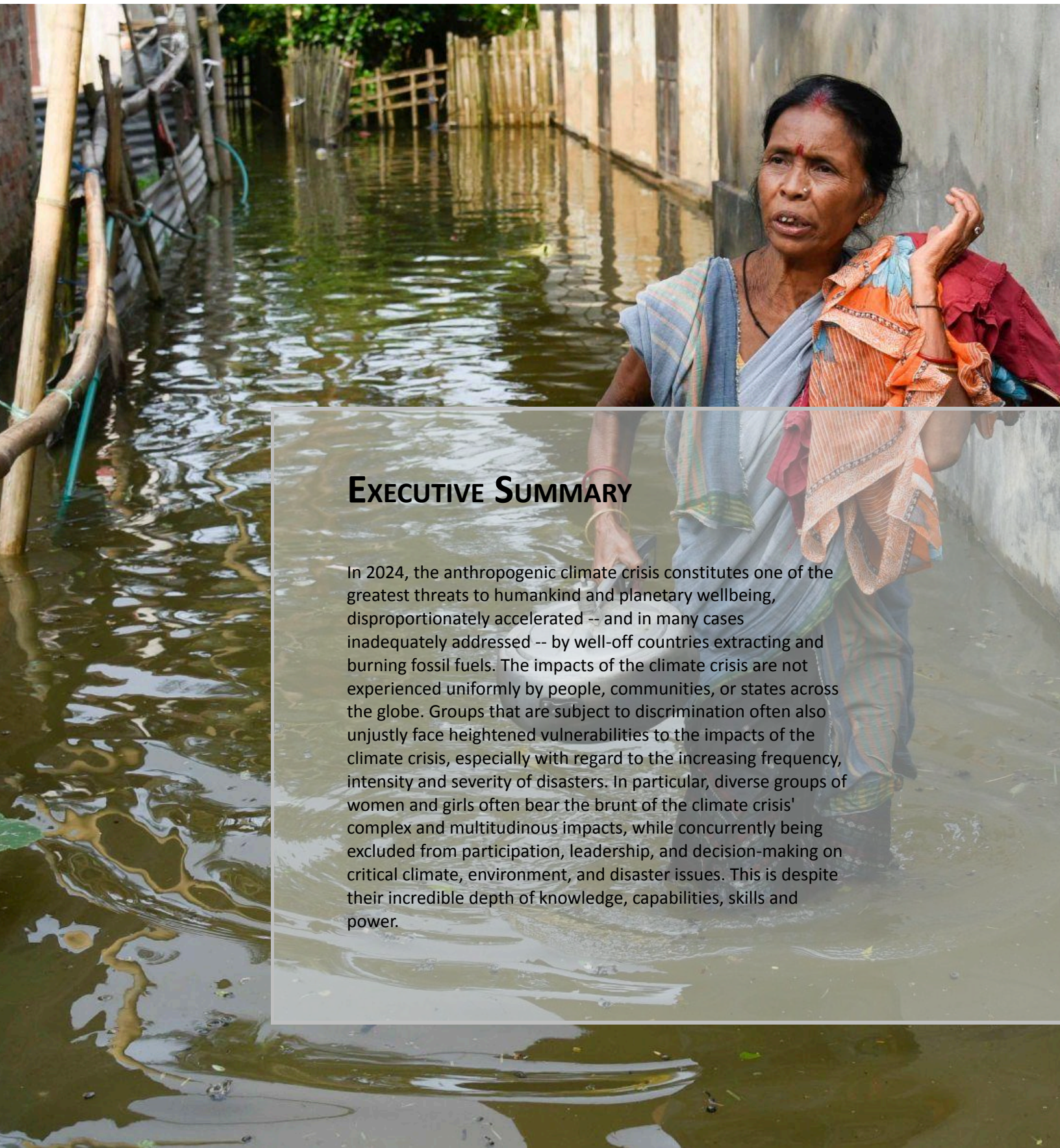
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, the anthropogenic climate crisis constitutes one of the greatest threats to humankind and planetary wellbeing, disproportionately accelerated -- and in many cases inadequately addressed -- by well-off countries extracting and burning fossil fuels. The impacts of the climate crisis are not experienced uniformly by people, communities, or states across the globe. Groups that are subject to discrimination often also unjustly face heightened vulnerabilities to the impacts of the climate crisis, especially with regard to the increasing frequency, intensity and severity of disasters. In particular, diverse groups of women and girls often bear the brunt of the climate crisis' complex and multitudinous impacts, while concurrently being excluded from participation, leadership, and decision-making on critical climate, environment, and disaster issues. This is despite their incredible depth of knowledge, capabilities, skills and power.

The growing requirement for governments and government agencies -- including defense and security agencies -- to plan for, mitigate against, and respond to domestic and regional climate and health crises demands the application of an intersectional gender perspective. Along with key global conventions and policies -- including the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and Gender Action Plan to Support Implementation of the Sendai Framework (2024) -- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the broader Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda provides an important framework for addressing gender inequalities, insecurities, and exclusions in disaster and climate crisis contexts. The need for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) will only increase as disasters multiply and compound across the globe, however no security/defense sector climate action or national adaptation plan in the Indo-Pacific currently integrates a robust gender perspective. This poses a significant risk to the perpetuation and exacerbation of gendered harms and inequalities through gender-blind disaster and climate response.

Addressing this deficiency, Pacific Forum's *Gender in Health and Climate Security* project centered on recognising and elevating the wealth of perspectives, experiences, and expertise of women from civil society organizations in Fiji, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Philippines, Thailand, Vanuatu, and Vietnam. The project's virtual and hybrid / in-person workshops, held in January and April/May 2024 respectively, specifically aimed to emphasize local women's leadership and unique knowledge in discussions on climate, environment, and disaster. A fundamental aim of the workshops was to facilitate an inclusive, respectful space for mutual learning, knowledge sharing, and collaboration between women CSO representatives and their country's defense and security personnel as disaster responders. Such collaboration aims to foster closer relationships, embed stronger understandings and responsiveness to gendered insecurities by defense and security personnel, and generate a greater propensity for gender-transformative action in response to disasters, and climate and health crises. The project and workshop series (together with this Major Report and its shortened *Report In-Brief* version) therefore aim to advance gender equality and improve the inclusiveness and human security focus of HA/DR in the region.

Given the complexities of integrating a gender perspective in climate and health crisis management planning, the approaches developed through the project were in part experimental. Participants responded with constructive, encouraging and overwhelmingly positive feedback. For most of the CSO representatives and defense and security personnel, these workshops represented their first opportunity to talk and collaborate directly with one another, including at the domestic and inter-regional level. Conversations were open, rich and respectful; engagement with the topics was deep; and cross-sector relationships were forged, with many participants sharing the intention to continue building these relationships into the future. Participants also produced a solid list of steps forward, including a list of priority action areas for advancing gender-responsive HA/DR in their own country contexts.

First Civ-Mil Collaboration for Many

This was my first experience at a workshop where I had an opportunity to interact with defense personnel. It provided a great platform to share knowledge and learn from each other's experiences.

~Priyatma Singh
The University of Fiji

Workshop participants indicated an eagerness for collaboration to continue, with many requesting future engagements and train-the-trainer events. The Project team also identified ways in which this workshop series could be further strengthened in future iterations. For example, some participants requested increased small group discussion time, access to all presentation slides before and during the sessions, and more workshops – perhaps with fewer countries – to enable more focused coverage of individual topics. For many of the countries involved, the number of persons interested in participating was greater than the event capacity, and many suggested the inclusion of greater numbers of defense and security personnel from each country. Future events would benefit from additional language support, as well as resources allotted to survey co-creation. These and other suggestions will be incorporated into future projects.

The Project made space for multiple fruitful levels of collaboration and learning: among defense / security forces, civil servants, and local women's CSOs, and between countries and regions. Across the virtual and hybrid workshops, the 17 total sessions of civ-mil knowledge sharing and engagement generated important new insights and ideas regarding inclusive, intersectional, and gender-transformative approaches to addressing the gender-climate-health-security nexus across the Indo-Pacific. The co-created Gendered Risk Assessment and Action Plan Tool (GRAAPT) (see Appendix 3), provides a foundational resource with which diverse actors and institutions can comprehensively integrate gender perspectives and the expertise and knowledge of women into civ-mil disaster planning and response, with the hope of achieving more effective and equitable responses to disasters and health crises. In the coming months and years, we hope to continue to collaborate and build upon these insights, fostering even greater inclusivity and power-sharing in our collective efforts to address the complex interconnections between gender, climate, health, and security in the Indo-Pacific.

HOW TO USE THIS MAJOR REPORT

We have developed this Major Report *Gender in Civil-Military Climate Security and Disaster Response* as a guide for how to navigate the intersecting and overlapping challenges of the gender, climate change, and security triple nexus. This Report aims to provide a detailed understanding of the complex interplay between intersectional gender insecurities, the climate crisis, and security risks, and to thereby aid CSOs, defense and security forces, and government policymakers in co-creating more collaborative and inclusive disaster responses. It was designed as both a thematic investigation and practical tool for addressing harmful gender norms and advancing gender equality in climate security work. This 'how-to' overview provides a roadmap for leveraging the Report. Recognising the importance of readily accessible gender equality programming tools, a separate [*Report In-Brief* version](#) offers a more succinct version of this Report (while also including the full **Gendered Risk Assessment and Action Plan Tool (GRAAPT))**.

Chapter 1: Exploring the Climate-Security Nexus in the Indo-Pacific: The climate crisis, predominantly driven by human activities, poses one of the greatest threats to global and human security, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. As climate change leads to more frequent and severe natural disasters, there is an increasing need for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR). This section highlights the climate-security risks faced by the seven countries involved in the Project, providing an overview of climate threats and vulnerabilities specific to each nation. With this context in mind, we set the stage for understanding why adopting a gender lens is fundamental to HA/DR planning.

Chapter 2: Gender-Climate-Security: Exploring the Triple Nexus: Understanding the intersection of gender, climate, and security is crucial for addressing human security concerns. Moreover, human insecurities are frequently tied to and can escalate into national and international security issues. This section explores the triple nexus in detail.
- **Human Security**: This section outlines a list of indicators linking gendered human (in)security directly to broader security concerns. It highlights how factors such as access to resources, health services, and economic opportunities mutually influence national and international stability.
- **National/International Security**: This section summarizes the ways in which gendered vulnerabilities manifest in various security risks, at community, societal, national, and international levels as a way of understanding the key dynamics to developing security strategies that incorporate gender perspectives and gendered needs.

Chapter 3: International Laws and Frameworks: This section draws on international laws and frameworks in underscoring policy avenues for integrating the triple nexus into security planning. It includes a focus on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda and WPS action plans, as well as ongoing opportunities and challenges in mutual recognition between customary laws and common laws.

Chapter 4: The Phenomenal Expertise, Capabilities, and Leadership of Women and Women's CSOs in Southeast Asia and the Pacific: An effective, if underexplored pathway for integrating an intersectional gender perspective into disaster management planning is through civil-military cooperation which elevates the knowledge and leadership of women and women's CSOs. This chapter explores the vital need for ensuring inclusive, effective and human security focused disaster response and climate adaptation strategies, and offers suggestions for best practices.

Chapter 5: Towards Gender-Transformative Action Plans and MEAL Processes: This chapter provides an overview of the creation of gender-transformative action plans and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) processes. Having offered guidance for how to thematically develop these plans throughout the report, we finish by emphasizing the importance of women's leadership in co-creative civil-military partnerships for disaster response.

Appendices: Appendix 1 provides some brief details about the **community survey**, while **Appendix 2** outlines our **Equity in Discussion Guidelines.** This Project was designed to promote interactions, networking, and inclusive and transformative engagements among gender, disaster, and climate CSOs, national defense and security personnel, and civil service officers, to co-create a **Gendered Risk Assessment and Action Plan Tool (GRAAPT) (Appendix 3)**. The full GRAAPT is available in Appendix 3. It aims to be adaptable to diverse scenarios based on local circumstances, and can be used to generate place-based and context-specific strategies that respond to the intersectional, gendered needs of all persons across the phases of disaster -- before, during, and after.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE GENDER IN HEALTH AND CLIMATE SECURITY PROJECT

This Major Report, along with the accompanying *Proactive Resilience and Opportunities for Gender Equity in Security & Sustainability (PROGRESS) in the Asia-Pacific: The index for gendered health security amid climate change* Report, provide a detailed overview of the Gender in Health and Climate Security Project ('the Project') produced by Pacific Forum International, a Honolulu-based U.S. think tank, in partnership with the Office of Women, Peace & Security (WPS) at the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM). In building on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, and recognizing the critical need to advance gender equality and human security across all domains of health and climate security in the Indo-pacific region – and globally – the Project's objectives were to:

- Encourage women's meaningful participation within participating country defense and security sectors.
- Increase women's access / participation in assistance programs, resources, training, and education.
- Increase participating country defense and security institutional understanding of how to advance women's meaningful participation in defense / security.
- Strengthen participating country defense and security sectors' understanding and commitment to international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The Project centered around holding a series of virtual and in-person / hybrid workshops on the gender-health-climate-security nexus. These workshops brought together civil society organization (CSO) representatives, defense and security force personnel, and civil servants from seven Indo-Pacific countries: Fiji, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand, Vanuatu, and Vietnam. The workshops aimed to foster collaborative efforts in developing country-specific Action Plan priorities for inclusive, contextualized, and gender-transformative disaster responses. A core focus thereby was to enhance civil-military (civ-mil) mutual learning, support, engagement and co-creation across the multiple phases of disaster prevention, preparation, and management, as well as in diverse climate crisis contexts.

Two sets of interactive workshops were held in 2024: an introductory two-day virtual workshop involving 45 participants was held on January 30 & 31, followed by a major in-person / hybrid workshop involving 44 participants held in Bali, Indonesia on April 29, 30, May 1 & 2. In total, the two workshops comprised 17 sessions, which covered a mix of presentations and case studies by CSO representatives, defense and security officers, academics, and civil servants from 9 Indo-Pacific countries (including the seven participant countries), small group working sessions on gender-health-climate security nexus indicators, large group working-sessions and discussions, and guided training sessions. A list of all participants / partners / defense agencies is included on page 17.

In the lead-up to the workshops, the Project also comprised a community survey on the gender-climate-health-security nexus, conducted in the seven Indo-Pacific countries included in the Project. The survey sought to assess women's experiences and perspectives on the impact of recent climate and health-related crises. Forty-one survey participants (all women), including local community members and local women's civil society organization members, answered one of two versions of the survey, each of which had 47 or 48 questions. In order to minimize the burden of more unpaid work on women, participants received a small cash gift for their time. Survey responses containing opinions, perspectives, and experiences of community members were analyzed through qualitative methods such as thematic analysis or content analysis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights that provide a better understanding of viewpoints on gender in climate and health security in the seven partner countries of the Project. Some results of the survey can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Further, a 3D mapping exercise was conducted. Visuals have the power to convey conditions more effectively than words alone, as they engage readers at a visceral level, enabling them to comprehend complex concepts and emotions instantaneously. With this in mind, members of the Pacific Forum WPS Fellowship Team undertook a 3D mapping project to assess the concrete challenges many women experience before, during, and after climate-related disasters. Working with women in rural communities in the Philippines and Indonesia through a third-party contractor, Pacific Forum collected 3D mapping sample data on the condition of roads, local health clinics, food sources, and other infrastructure - factors which determine the level of climate security local communities commonly experience, and which inform a gender-perspective of human insecurity. The 3D Mapping Project visually depicts (gendered) vulnerabilities exacerbated by climate change. Two parallel surveys were conducted enabling the Mapping Project to showcase the conditions in two

anonymized Indigenous, rural, and agricultural sites in ongoing conflict areas in Indonesia and the Philippines. Both sites experience high disaster risks. One local Indigenous woman from each site was taught to use free and open source geospatial tools and smart phones to visualize the experience of roadways, family farms, and local markets, healthcare facilities, and schools. The photos and other data collected by each woman was processed into 3D maps of the sites. These "digital twins'' are exact replicas or reconstructions of selected environments. By extracting special data from photos and geospatial data collection, these 3D maps allow for a more true-to-life study of the conditions in local villages that may impact residents before or during a climate disaster. Details of the 3D mapping exercise feature in section 40.

Image Credit: flickr/Mike Lewelling

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ORGANIZING PARTNERS

Pacific Forum International

Pacific Forum's mission is to promote peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific. Our work therefore dynamically addresses both longstanding and emerging security issues in the region. Currently, we characterize our programs under seven umbrella "Focus Areas."

While not inclusive of all our activities, these Focus Areas allow us to showcase the exciting initiatives underway at Pacific Forum. From timely publications and research resources to public events and key findings from our dialogues, the Focus Areas offer greater insight into the cross-cutting programs that distinguish us as a leading Indo-Pacific foreign policy research institute.

Current Focus Areas at Pacific Forum include:
- Nonproliferation
- Strategic Relations
- Maritime Security
- Cybersecurity and Critical Technologies
- Women, Peace & Security
- Public Engagement
- The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP)

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The U.S. IndoPacific CommandIndo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) office of WPS advances human security through a whole-of-government, whole-of-society, multinational, and localized approach. This cross-cutting avenue to advance a Free and Open Indo-Pacific forges new alliances building on the architecture of innovative forums for subject matter experts (SME) to address emerging complex global security issues, such as climate security, health security, human security, cybersecurity, trafficking in persons (TIP), and more.

The USINDOPACOM office of WPS partnership with Pacific Forum brought together local and regional experts, civil society, and the defense and security sector to participate in a series of virtual and hybrid workshops, "Gender in Health and Climate Security." The findings from the workshop and additional research products highlight the importance of community engagement, regular collaborations, and the pivotal role application of a gender lens provides to meaningful engagement and targeted problem solving. USINDOPACOM is committed to advancing WPS alongside our regional allies and partners through continued support and collaboration on events such as this to achieve mutual objectives and sustainable outcomes.

USINDOPACOM began institutionalizing WPS through a command instruction in 2017, followed by the establishment of an Office of Women, Peace & Security in 2019. This new capability oversees command- wide implementation of WPS that includes gender mainstreaming throughout the command's policies, plans, programs, exercises, and assessments; tailored education and training; partner nation engagement; research innovation and application; and guiding a growing network of trained Gender Advisors and Gender Focal Points. The Office of WPS employs a Command Gender Advisor, Senior Analyst, Security Cooperation Integrator, Security Cooperation Administrator, Planner, Policy and Partnerships Advisor, and Operations Management. Through institutional authority and wide operational application, WPS provides unique insights expanding security cooperation opportunities and strengthening collaboration with allies and partners to better mitigate the impacts of emerging global threats and complex security challenges.

Mission Statement: The Office of Women, Peace & Security (WPS) implements the DoD WPS Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan by mainstreaming a gender perspective into theater plans, programs, and policies in order to enable the USINDOPACOM enterprise to develop inclusive security strategies that advance a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

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Coral Triangle Center

The Pacific Forum thanks the Coral Triangle Center (CTC) for providing their engaging and inspiring meeting space and for their logistical support. We are also grateful for their partnership in developing topical content and identifying subject matter experts to explore these important topics. The CTC is an independent, non-profit foundation whose goal is to promote the conservation of marine biodiversity and the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources across the Coral Triangle.

Pacific Disaster Center

We also thank the Pacific Disaster Center (PDC) for lending their expertise and providing valuable background material, including country-specific briefs and the use of the DisasterAWARE platform.

Pacific Disaster Center (PDC Global) is an applied research center managed by the University of Hawaii that supports the most demanding governmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide in helping to create a safer, more disaster resilient world. For more than 25 years, [they]we've helped our partners enhance disaster management capacity, save lives, and reduce disaster losses through the application of our advanced tools and technologies, evidence-based research, and analytical information.

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National Disasters Management Authority of the BNPB
New Zealand
New Zealand Defence Force
Papua New Guinea
Papua New Guinea Defence Force
Thailand
Disaster Relief Division. Royal Thai Army
Disaster Information Section, Royal Thai Army
Thai Ministry of Defense
Philippines
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International Cooperation Division, Vietnam Peacekeeping Department
Department of Food Hygiene and Nutrition, Military Institute of Preventive Medicine
Ministry of National Defense, Committee for Population, Family and Children
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Participating Civil Society Organizations

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Women Working Group, Indonesia
Vanuatu
ActionAid Vanuatu
Vanuatu Human Rights Coalition
Vanuatu Young Women for Change
Papua New Guinea
Advancing PNG Women Leaders Network (APNGWLN)
Philippines
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Global Network of Women Peacebuilders
Sulong PEACE
Vietnam
Center for Create Initiatives in Health and Population (CCIHP)
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Thailand
Civic Women
Women's Network of Disaster in the Deep South of Thailand
Fiji
Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
The Pacific Center for Peacebuilding (PCP)
Transcend Oceania
The University of Fiji
United States
Pacific Disaster Center (USA)

Exploring the Climate-Security Nexus in the Indo-Pacific

The overwhelmingly human-caused climate crisis is one of the greatest threats to humankind, disproportionately accelerated – and largely inadequately addressed – by well-off countries extracting and burning fossil fuels, and causing unsustainable levels of greenhouse gas emissions. The climate crisis is also contributing to the occurrence of more frequent, intense and severe weather events, natural disasters and humanitarian crises globally. Alarmingly, the worsening impacts of the climate crisis are generating profound shifts in security from the local to the international level. The Indo-Pacific region is one of the global epicenters of climate-related insecurity. Southeast Asian countries and Pacific Island countries are among the most climate crisis vulnerable and disaster-prone in the world, posing major challenges to human rights, development, environmental stability, and sustainable economies. Climate hazards' intensity and frequency have increased over time, with typhoons / tropical cyclones, flooding, and sea-level rise identified as amongst the most serious natural hazards for these sub-regions.[1] In providing a baseline for the Project, an overview of the climate-security threat faced in each participant country, and a brief comparison between Southeast Asian and Pacific countries, is outlined below.

PDC GLOBAL "CLIMATE EXPOSURE" RANKINGS
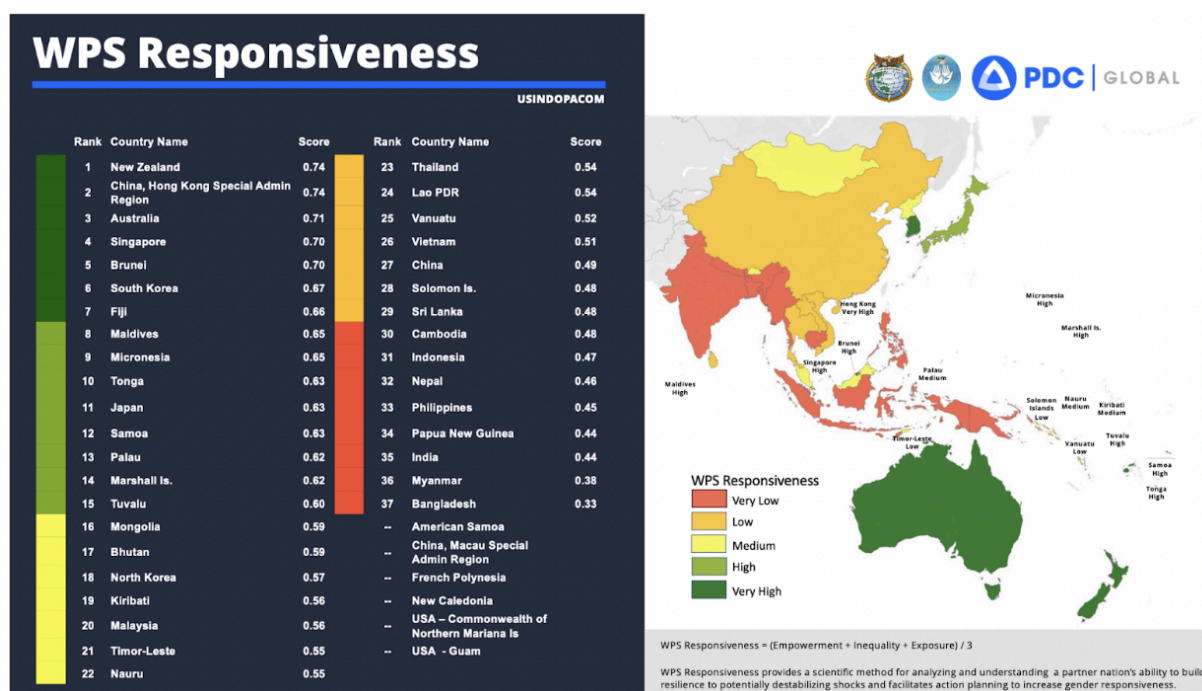
Figure 1: PDC's WPS Responsiveness Analysis in the Indo-Pacific provides a rank of which countries have the greatest risk from lack of gender equity and inclusion -- green countries are the highest rank and have the least risk from gender inequity, while orange countries are the lowest ranked with the highest risk from gender inequity.

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[1] UNESCAP, "The Disaster Riskscape Across Asia-Pacific: Pathways for Resilience, Inclusion and Empowerment. Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019 (APDR 2019)" (Bangkok: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2019), https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/IDD-APDR-Subreport-Pacific-SIDS.pdf.

Located in Hawaii'i, the Pacific Disaster Centre (PDC Global) has conducted climate security analyses for 46 countries and territories in the Indo-Pacific region, including the seven Project participant countries. PDC Global has produced reports including the *Indo-Pacific 2050 Climate Change Impact Analysis*, which comprises detailed analyses of regional data to understand current and future levels of climate risk and climate exposure.[2] Climate exposure considers climate change hazard exposures to sea-level rise, consecutive dry days, extreme heat, extreme precipitation, and tropical cyclone hazard zones. The report's index on Climate Risk (2050) is a composite projected measure of climate exposure, coping capacity and vulnerability for forty-six countries and territories in Asia and the Pacific in the year 2050. Of the project participant countries, Southeast Asian countries rank highly (Indonesia - 3rd, Philippines - 5th, Vietnam - 6th, Thailand - 9th), while Pacific Island countries also face significant climate exposure (PNG - 10th, Vanuatu - 15th, Fiji - 18th). Below, the unique hazards and risks facing the project participant countries are briefly outlined.

PDC's WPS analytical framework was developed in partnership with the United States Department of Defense (DoD). It provides an evidence-based approach to effectively implement the national WPS Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan (SFIP) through inclusive security. The analysis identifies key gender characteristics and issues to better inform planning and help identify and long-term investment programs to improve gender-based resilience, peace, and security around the globe. In the Indo-Pacific, their WPS Responsiveness analysis provides a view of which countries have the greatest risk from lack of gender equity and inclusion. Figure 1 illustrates this framework with countries ranked based on their risk due to gender inequity.

Image Credit: The World Economic Forum

[2] Joseph Green et al., "Indo-Pacific 2050 Climate Change Impact Analysis: Anticipating Climate Change Impacts to Enhance Climate Security Across the Region" (PDC Global, 2023), https://www.cfe-dmha.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=-PYj1b0z9vQ%3d&portalid=0.

FIJI

Fiji is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and climate-related disasters. It experiences high exposure to cyclones, rising sea-levels, floods, and landslides, and high vulnerability to climate extremes such as drought and extreme rainfall. The impacts of sea level rise include potential inundation, coastal erosion, and saline intrusion. Increases in the frequency and intensity of events such as cyclones, floods, and landslides represent a major threat to livelihoods, infrastructure, and human wellbeing. The various projected impacts of climate change are likely to affect Fiji's poor, marginalized, and remote communities most significantly.[3]

PDC Global 2050 Climate Change Impact Analysis:
Climate Exposure ranking: 18th
Estimated population exposed to climate change primary impacts: 856,000 persons*
Estimated population exposed to:
> *Tropical Cyclones: 856,000[4]*
> *Extreme Precipitation: 840,000*
*(current population CIA 951,611 (2024 est.)[5]

INDONESIA

Indonesia ranks in the top third of countries in the world in terms of climate risk, with high exposure to flooding, extreme heat, droughts and sea level rise. As the climate changes, the frequency and intensity of these hazards are anticipated to grow, and without targeted and effective adaptation strategies, the population's exposure to these hazards will rise, with catastrophic consequences. Recent studies show that the population exposed to an extreme river flood by 2035–2044 could grow by 1.4 million. Furthermore, Indonesia is highly vulnerable to sea-level rise, with the country ranked fifth highest in the world for the size of the population living in lower elevation coastal zones. The impacts of climate change will affect a number of Indonesian sectors and regions and may, by 2100, cost between 2.5–7% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).[6]

PDC 2050 Impact Analysis:
Climate Exposure ranking: 3rd
Estimated population exposed to CC primary impacts: 251 million
Estimated population exposed to:
> *Extreme Precipitation: 241.3 million*
> *Extreme Heat: 130.6 million*
*(current population CIA 281,562,465 (2024 est.)[7]

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[3] "Climate Risk Country Profile: Indonesia" (Washington, DC: World Bank Group | Asia Development Bank, 2021), https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/15504-Indonesia%20Country%20Profile-WEB_0.pdf.
[4] *NB: For each country, the top two hazards are listed according to the number of predicted exposed persons in 2050.*
[5] Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Population," 2024, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/population/country-comparison/.
[6] "Indonesia: Climate Risk Country Profile" (The World Bank and Asian Development Bank, 2021), https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/15504-Indonesia%20Country%20Profile-WEB_0.pdf.
[7] Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Population."

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Papua New Guinea is highly vulnerable to climate change. In the coming years, climate change in PNG will intensify flash flooding, including coastal flooding, as well as landslides and droughts. The segment of the population affected by river flooding, and its economic damages, is projected to double by 2030. Exposure to hazards is significant and likely to increase, with many rural communities living in flood and landslide risk areas. Coastal communities and infrastructure often have high levels of exposure to sea-level rise with potential amplification due to storm surges. Extreme heat is very likely to present a human health risk in PNG, as temperatures will be closer to unsafe levels. As a consequence, the degradation of natural resources is more than likely, as well as shifts in the viable ranges for plant and animal species, reducing agricultural yields, and accelerating the decline of PNG's unique ecosystems.[8]

PDC 2050 Impact Analysis:
Climate Exposure ranking: 22nd
Estimated population exposed to CC primary impacts: 7.4 million*
Estimated population exposed to:
> *Extreme Precipitation: 7.4 million*
> *Extreme Heat: 1.5 million*
*(current population 10,046,233 (CIA 2024 est.)[9]

THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines faces some of the highest disaster risk levels in the world and these risks are projected to intensify due to climate change. The country is exposed to tropical cyclones, flooding, sea-level rise, and landslides. In recent years, the number of tropical cyclones has steadily increased, with tropical cyclones demonstrating greater intensity. Furthermore, sea-level rise takes place at an above-average rate in some parts of the Philippines, leading to one million people being at risk of flooding by 2070–2100.[10] The agricultural sector is especially vulnerable to climate change impacts, as increased flooding and likelihood of droughts will have a catastrophic impact on agricultural land, bringing a decrease in agricultural productivity.

PDC 2050 Impact Analysis:
Climate Exposure ranking: 6th
Estimated population exposed to CC primary impacts: 99.1 million*
Estimated population exposed to:
> *Tropical Cyclones: 99.1 million*
> *Extreme Precipitation: 75.8 million*
*(current population 118,277,063 (CIA 2024 est.)

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[8] World Bank Group, "Country Risk Profile Papua New Guinea," 2021, https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/country-profiles/15871-WB_Papua%20New%20Guinea%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf.

[9] Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Population."

[10] "Philippines: Climate Risk Country Profile" (The World Bank, 2011), https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/wb_gfdrr_climate_change_country_profile_for_PHL.pdf.

THAILAND

Thailand is recognized as highly vulnerable to climate change due to its increasing natural disasters, such as heavy rainfall, floods, and droughts, as well as sea level rise on the country's coasts. Thailand is considered one of the most flood-affected countries in the world, as floods are, by far, the greatest natural hazard in terms of economic and human impacts. Drought and cyclones also represent major hazards that can easily increase their impacts in future climate change-related scenarios. Studies show that the agriculture sector will be significantly affected by climate change. This is due to Thailand's location in the tropics, where agricultural productivity is particularly vulnerable to temperature rises. Thailand is focusing its efforts to adapt and prevent climate change on key sectors such as energy, water, transportation, agriculture, human settlements and public health.

PDC 2050 Impact Analysis:
Climate Exposure ranking: 4th
Estimated population exposed to CC primary impacts: 68 million*
Estimated population exposed to:
> *Tropical Cyclones: 68 million*
> *Extreme Heat: 65.1 million*
*(current population 69,920,998 (CIA 2024 est.)[11]

VANUATU

Vanuatu's main climate hazards are tropical cyclones, where precipitation variations are strongly influenced by the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), flooding, heatwaves and sea level rise. In the country, disasters resulting from natural hazards are a significant contributor to issues of social deprivation and they hinder economic development costing, on average, an estimated 6% of GDP every year.[12] As a result, Vanuatu is considered one of the most vulnerable nations in the world due to its exposure to climate change, development context, and precarious natural resource base.

PDC 2050 Impact Analysis:
Climate Exposure ranking: 24th
Estimated population exposed to CC primary impacts: 354,000*
Estimated population exposed to:
> *Tropical Cyclones: 263,000*
> *Extreme Precipitation: 229,000*
*(current population 318,007 (CIA 2024 est.)[13]

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[11] Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Population."
[12] "Vanuatu," World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal, accessed June 12, 2024, https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/.
[13] Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Population."

VIETNAM

Vietnam's long coastline, geographic location, and varied climate make it one of the most hazard-prone countries in Southeast Asia. It ranks among the five countries likely to be most affected by climate change as a high proportion of its population and economic assets are based on its coastal lowlands, an area deeply affected by the impacts of climate change. It has been estimated that climate change will reduce national income by up to 3.5% by 2050.[14] Vietnam's main climate hazards, based on its geography or low-lying coastal and river deltas, are rises in sea level and in atmospheric temperatures. Rises in annual maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to be stronger than the rise in average temperature, likely amplifying the impacts on human health, livelihoods, and ecosystems.[15] Specifically, 6-12 million people may be affected by coastal flooding by 2070–2100 if no effective adaptation strategy is put in place. This would also bring a loss of agricultural productivity, especially for key food and cash crops due to saline intrusion and shifts in the viable geographical range of plant species.[16]

PDC 2050 Impact Analysis:
Climate Exposure ranking: 2nd
Estimated population exposed to CC primary impacts: 93.6 million*
Estimated population exposed to:
    Tropical Cyclones: 93.3 million
    Extreme Heat: 74.6 million
*(current population 105,758,975 (CIA 2024 est.)[17]

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[14] Channing Arndt, Finn Tarp, and James Thurlow, "The Economic Costs of Climate Change: A Multi-Sector Impact Assessment for Vietnam," *Sustainability* 7, no. 4 (April 2015): 4131–45, https://doi.org/10.3390/su7044131.
[15] "Vietnam Vulnerability," World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal, accessed July 30, 2021, https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/vietnam/vulnerability.
[16] "Vietnam Vulnerability."
[17] Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Population."

Trends in Climate (In)Security in Southeast Asia and Pacific Islands Countries

In assessing the vulnerability and exposure of the Project participant countries to climate change, we also referred to The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies' (HCSS) *Climate Security Assessment* (which assessed countries based on climate security hazards),[18] The Fund for Peace's *Fragile States Index* (which measures vulnerabilities that contribute to the risk of state fragility),[19] Germanwatch's *Global Climate Risk Index* (which identifies level of exposures and vulnerabilities to extreme events by quantifying the impacts of these events in terms of fatalities and economic loss),[20] and the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative *ND-GAIN Country Index* (which measures climate vulnerability and adaptation readiness in 192 countries globally).[21] The data from these analyses and indices are captured below.

	HCSS Top Two Climate Hazards (per country)	Fragile State Index (1=low fragility)	Climate Security Assessment's Exposure (1=lowest exposure)	ND-GAIN Index Susceptibility (1=lowest susceptibility)	PDC Climate Exposure Ranking (1 =most exposed)
South East Asia Countries					
Thailand	Flooding, Typhoon	91st most fragile	43rd most exposed	71st upper middle in exposure, sensitivity, and capacity to adapt	4th most climate exposed
Vietnam	Flooding, Typhoon	118th most fragile	50th most exposed	100th lower middle in exposure, sensitivity, and capacity to adapt	7th most climate exposed
Indonesia	Flooding, Typhoon	98th most fragile	25th most exposed	98th lower middle in exposure, sensitivity, and capacity to adapt	3rd most climate exposed
Philippines	Typhoon, Sea Level Rise	61st most fragile	27th most exposed	122nd lower middle in exposure, sensitivity, and capacity to adapt	6th most climate exposed

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[18] Femke Remmits, Elisabeth Dick, and Michel Rademaker, "Climate Security Assessment: A Methodology and Assessment of the Nexus between Climate Hazards and Security of Nations and Regions" (The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, December 2020), https://hcss.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Climate-Security-Assessment-March-2021.pdf.

[19] "Fragile States Index 2020 – Annual Report" (The Fund For Peace, May 2020), https://fragilestatesindex.org/2020/05/08/fragile-states-index-2020-annual-report/.

[20] David Eckstein et al., "Global Climate Risk Index 2020 Who Suffers Most from Extreme Weather Events? Wether-Related Loss Events in 2018 and 1999 to 2018" (Bonn, Germany: Germanwatch, 2019), https://germanwatch.org/sites/germanwatch.org/files/20-2-01e%20Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202020_14.pdf.

[21] "Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN)," Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative, accessed July 31, 2021, https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/rankings/.

	HCSS Top Two Climate Hazards (per country)	Fragile State Index (1=low fragility)	Climate Security Assessment's Exposure (1=lowest exposure)	ND-GAIN Index Susceptibility (1=lowest susceptibility)	PDC Climate Exposure Ranking (1 =most exposed)
Pacific Islands					
Vanuatu	Typhoon, Sea Level Rise	Not Included	73rd most exposed	139th low in exposure, sensitivity, and capacity to adapt	24th most climate exposed
PNG	Typhoon, Flooding	59th most fragile	59st most exposed	167th low in exposure, sensitivity, and capacity to adapt	22nd most climate exposed
Fiji	Cyclones, Flooding	82nd most fragile	75th most exposed	77th lower middle in exposure, sensitivity, and capacity to adapt	19th most climate exposed

Trends in Climate Hazards

Legend: ■ Fragile State Index ■ Exposure (Climate Risk Index) ■ Susceptibility (ND-GAIN Index)
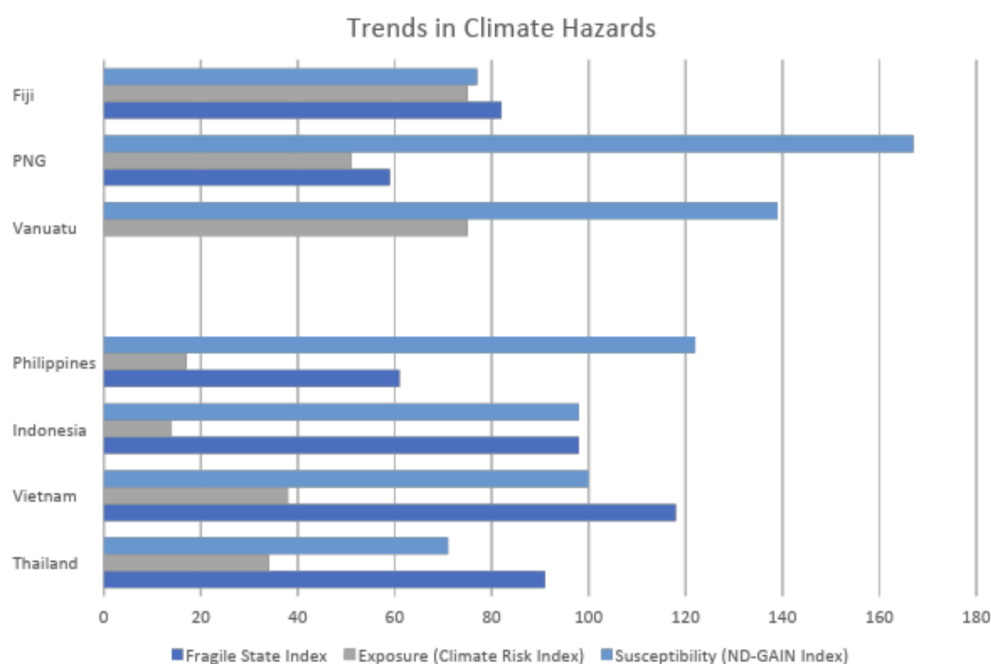
Table 1 (above): Summarizes the results of several climate security analyses and indices, including PDC's Climate Exposure Ranking. Figure 2 (below): Compares the rankings of three indices to visualize which countries are likely to experience the most serious climate insecurities. Both produced by Pacific Forum.

While all Project participant countries are identified as facing medium to extremely high levels of climate exposure and vulnerability, there is also evidence that the countries also have very differing capacities to adapt to climate crisis impacts. Of the countries participating in this Project, based on PDC Global's Climate Risk Index, the two most exposed Southeast Asian and Pacific Island countries are Indonesia (14th most exposed) and Papua New Guinea (51st most exposed), while for the ND-GAIN Index, the Philippines (122nd) and Papua New Guinea (167th) are the more at-risk countries for high exposure to climate events and lower capacity to adapt. In combination with the projections by PDC Global, which include estimates of the portion of the population which will be affected, these indices collectively

highlight the importance of human and community focused responses, capacity-building and knowledge-sharing, as well as nuanced and highly contextualized disaster planning and action. Further, they emphasize the need for comprehensive and collaborative approaches that draw on the capacities, capabilities and needs of *all* actors in each state, and each community. Responding to this heightened need, the sections that follow consider the evolving roles of defense and security actors in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the Indo-Pacific.
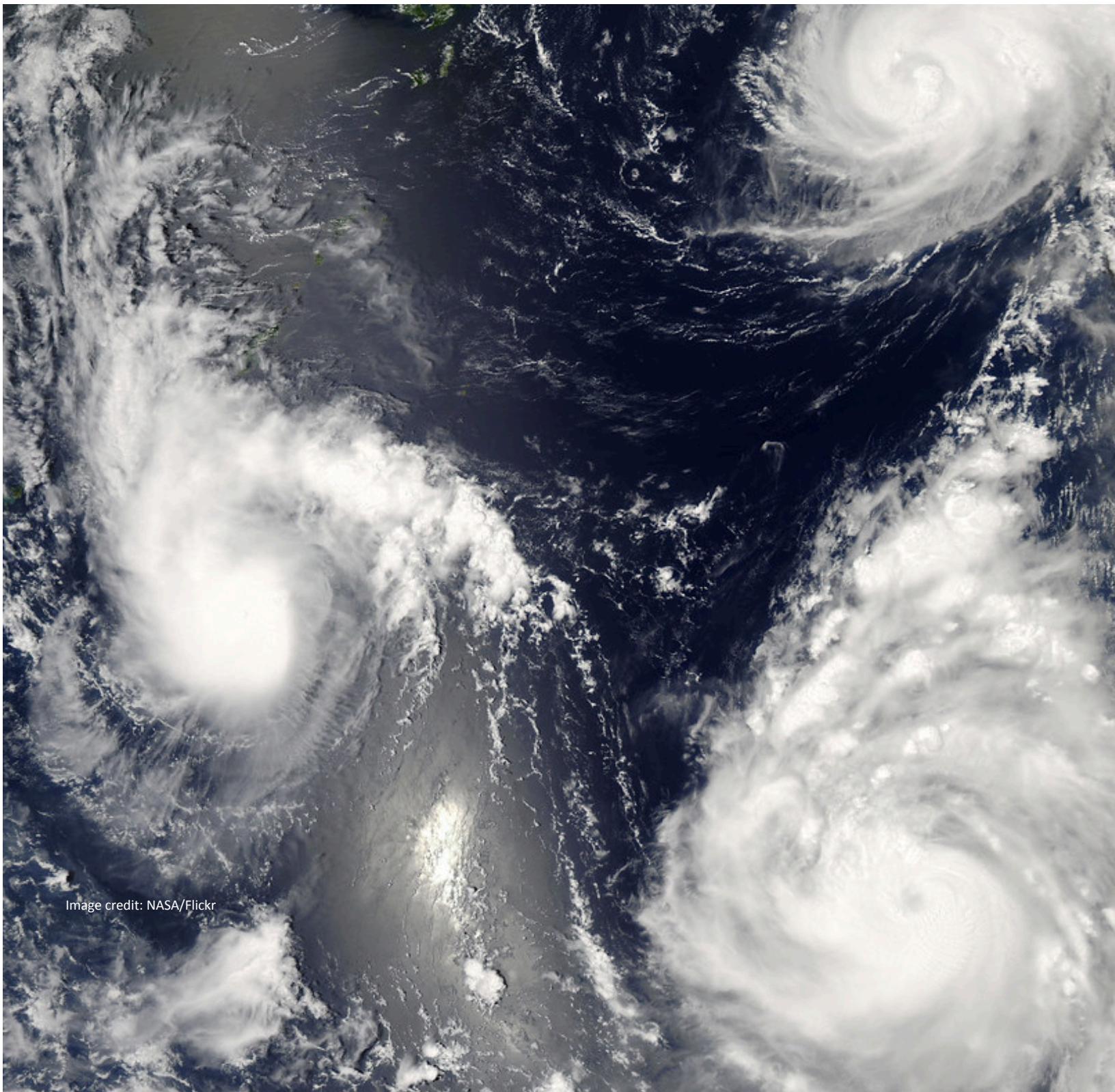
Image credit: NASA/Flickr

In the face of climate change, defense forces have two big challenges: 1) military readiness and 2) reducing our carbon footprint by working with less impact on the environment. The NZDF Future Force design principles incorporate the Maori principle of Kaitiakitanga 'guardianship': To ensure that when we move on, we have left the world and the country in a better state than it was when we found it.

~James Latornell, PhD,
Principal Policy Advisor,
New Zealand Defence Force

GROWING REGIONAL NEED FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF (HA/DR)

With the growing frequency, intensity, and severity of climate crisis events and disasters, defense and security institutions will be increasingly called upon to provide humanitarian aid and disaster relief (HA/DR),[22] and to mitigate the escalation of conflict and violence in the wake of climate-fuelled disasters across Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Globally, humanitarian need is continuing to surge, with nearly 300 million people requiring assistance in 2024.[23] As climate change intensifies, national defense systems will in turn be challenged by strained resources and readiness. The *World Climate and Security Report 2021*, produced by the International Military Council on Climate and Security (IMCCS), noted that climate security risks will continue to intensify across all regions of the globe, and that militaries will be increasingly overstretched. Critically, the report noted that "the global governance system is ill-equipped to deal with the security risks posed by climate change."[24] In June 2022, the Military Responses to Climate Hazards (MiRCH) platform was launched by the Washington DC-based Center for Climate and Security (CCS) (an institute of the Council on Security Risks) to track the deployment of military and paramilitary personnel and equipment in response to climate-related natural disasters and hazards, including heatwaves, flooding, drought, extreme precipitation, and storms and hurricanes.[25] In early 2024, an analysis of MiRCH data from June 2022 found military deployments proceeded on every continent (and from 68 countries globally) in response to climate-related disasters. Significantly, the analysis noted that such demand has stretched capacity, causing many to question military readiness for the increased pace and intensity of climate-crisis deployments.[26]

This burgeoning demand for HA/DR in disaster and climate crisis contexts underscores the importance of strategic forward thinking and planning. However, it also introduces practical and philosophical questions. Indeed, it has been noted that "the role

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[22] *Also known as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response.*
[23] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Global Humanitarian Overview 2024," May 25, 2024, https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2024-enarfres.
[24] Steve Brock et al., "The World Climate and Security Report 2021," Center for Climate and Security, an Institute of the Council on Strategic Risks (International Military Council on Climate and Security, June 2021), https://imccs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/World-Climate-and-Security-Report-2021.pdf.
[25] Tom Ellison, Erin Sikorsky, and Ethan Wong, "MiRCH Update: Key Takeaways from Tracking Climate-Related Military Deployments," *The Center for Climate & Security* (blog), January 18, 2024, https://climateandsecurity.org/2024/01/mirch-update-key-takeaways-from-tracking-climate-related-military-deployments/.
[26] Ellison, Sikorsky, and Wong, "MiRCH Update."

A gendered lens is really important. Without a gendered lens, the stronger one is bound to push the one who is less strong.

~Ruth Kissam, Advancing PNG Women Leaders Network

of militaries in responding to natural disasters is both vexed and controversial."[27] Across different contexts throughout Asia and the Pacific and within states themselves, different perspectives of and relationships to the military and the role(s) of the military prevail. Thus as disasters worsen across the region, there is a growing need for civilians to engage in open discussions regarding the extent to which militaries might respond to natural disasters. It is important to consider questions such as, "... what their specific role should be, to whom they should be accountable, and which resources specifically should be deployed from which branch of the armed services or indeed reserve forces."[28]

Also of critical concern is the question of the significant impact of militaries in producing greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for approximately 5.5 percent of emissions globally.[29] We are seeing evidence that military institutions are gradually acknowledging their fundamental responsibility towards reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and "global boiling."[30]

Image Credit: Wikimedia Commons/वर्षा देशपांडे

[27] Michael Brzoska and Matt McDonald, "Climate Change, Natural Disasters and the Military," *Toda Peace Institute*, Policy Brief, no. 77 (n.d.), https://toda.org/assets/files/resources/policy-briefs/t-pb_77_brzoska-and-mcdonald.pdf.

[28] Brzoska and McDonald, "Climate Change, Natural Disasters and the Military."

[29] John Coyne and Tariqul Hasan Rifat, "Armed Forces, Too, Must Help Fight Climate Change," *ASPI The Strategist*, April 18, 2024, https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/armed-forces-too-must-help-fight-climate-change/#:~:text=Militaries%20account%20for%205.5,the%20US%2C%20both%20think%20tanks.

[30] Ajit Niranjan, "'Era of Global Boiling Has Arrived,' Says UN Chief as July Set to Be Hottest Month on Record," *The Guardian*, July 27, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/science/2023/jul/27/scientists-july-world-hottest-month-record-climate-temperatures.

Yet worldwide, increasing militarization and arms build-up fueled by war and regional tensions remains a concerning trend,[31] both with regard to directly increasing climate emissions *and* in terms of the ways in which this can weaken the conditions for an international and regional environment where human security, gender justice and climate justice are foregrounded.[32]

THE RISKS OF GENDER-BLIND HA/DR

As the threats posed by the climate crisis and its impacts are taken more seriously by defense and security actors across the region, it is crucial to assess how gender inequalities and insecurities are conceptualized, engaged with -- or ignored -- by those acting to mitigate and / or respond to disasters. Conventional state-centric conceptualizations of "climate security" often too narrowly frame climate discussions within the scope of "hard security" issues. Perceived threats to states, the geopolitical order and the socio-political and economic status quo continue to dominate in high level decision-making and resource allocation, particularly through narratives that securitize the climate crisis. Although military deployments in response to disasters are growing, dominant approaches to crisis response across the Indo-Pacific region in many cases remain in the "gender blind" or "gender aware" sections of the *Gender Integration Continuum.** That is to say, they do not comprehensively integrate a gender-responsive approach to inequalities, let alone seek to advance *gender-transformative** outcomes. As such, they do not adequately address the broader ecological, social, political, racial, and intergenerational dynamics that underpin human insecurities in climate crisis and disaster contexts.
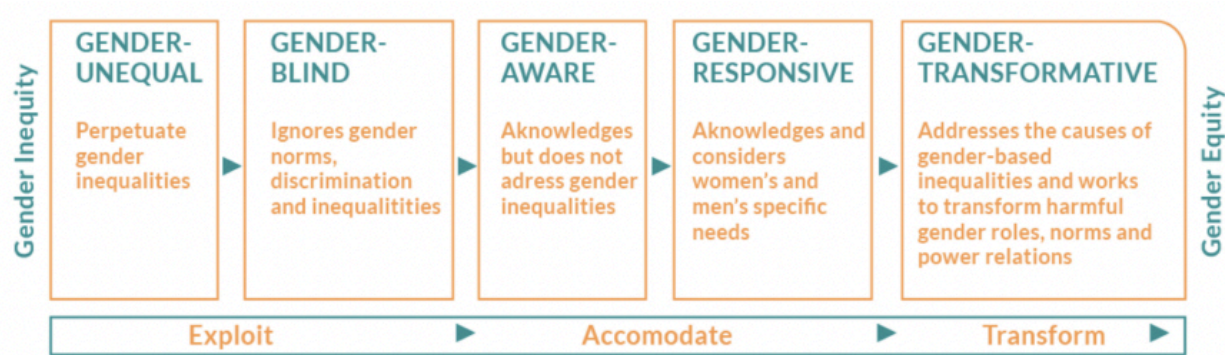

Figure 3: IWRM Gender Equality Continuum (Adapted from UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women, 2020)[33]

"The GIC describes a gradient from ignoring gender inequalities and other forms of exclusion (or even reproducing them through practices that intentionally or unintentionally reinforce or take advantage of negative gender stereotypes), to acknowledging the existence of differences, to the most advanced stage of enacting transformative change by taking into account the achievement of fully equal rights. The ultimate goal in a long-term perspective rests on being able to identify strategies to move a project along the continuum toward a gender transformative approach."[34]

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[31] SIPRI, "Global Military Spending Surges amid War, Rising Tensions and Insecurity," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, April 22, 2024,
https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2024/global-military-spending-surges-amid-war-rising-tensions-and-insecurity#:~:text=Global%20milita
ry%20spending%20surges%20amid%20war%2C%20rising%20tensions%20and%20insecurity,-22%20April%202024&text=(Stockholm%2C%2022%20
April%202024),on%2Dyear%20increase%20since%202009.
[32] Daniela Philipson Garcia, "Feminist Interventions: Resisting the Militarisation of the Climate Crisis," Report (Women's Environment and Development Organization, June 6, 2023), https://wedo.org/security-for-whom-new-report-on-feminist-perspectives-on-militarism-climate/.
[33] Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), "Addressing Gender Inclusion," IWRM Action Hub, 2024,
https://droughtclp.unccd.int/node/37/printable/print.
[34] Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), "Addressing Gender Inclusion."

Gender-Transformative Approaches

Transformative approaches go beyond a focus on "gaps" and simply acknowledging gender differences or adding women to a process. "Structural change" is the keyword in gender-transformative programming. Evidence shows that gender transformation needs sustained investments over time to change individual agency; gender roles, norms, and structural power dynamics; as well as legislative and institutional structures. Empowering women and girls and promoting them in positions of social and political influence is intrinsic to transformative change. People of all genders, in particular men and boys, can and should be actively involved as gender equality allies and agents of transformative change. Combined action across scales from the individual level through communities to systems is imperative.
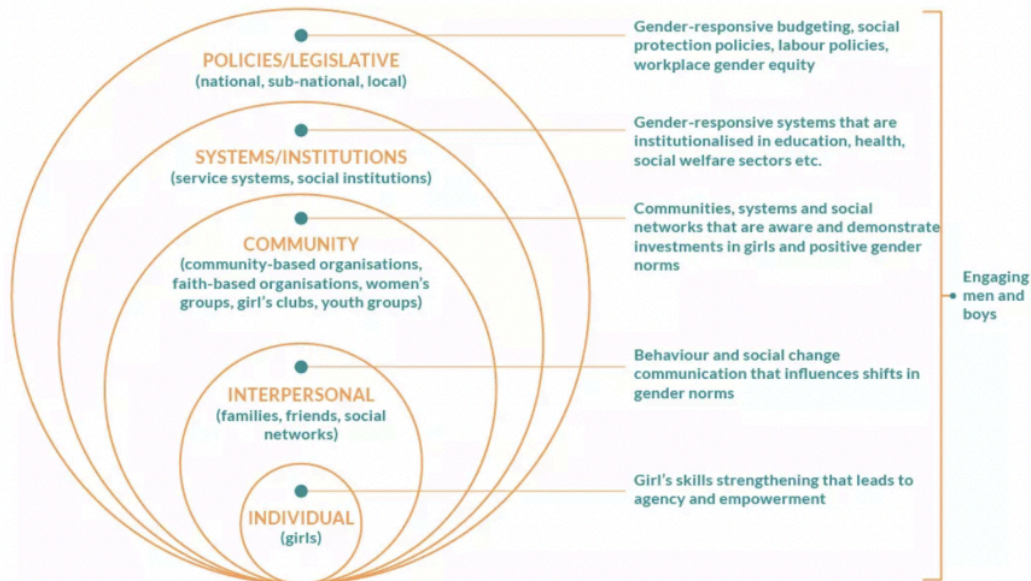
Figure 4: Gender Transformative Programming IWRM (Adapted from UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women, 2020)[35]

There are myriad interconnections and interdependencies between community, state and international security and (gendered) human security. As the following sections outline in detail, in delivering HA/DR in response to climate-related disasters, the very nature of defense and security activity needs to shift to center on meeting the diverse gendered and intersectional human security needs of those (most) impacted by disasters and climate-induced devastation. In doing so, drawing on feminist guiding principles can help ensure the application of gender-responsive, and ideally gender-transformative, approaches, elevate the experiences, knowledge, participation, decision-making, and leadership of diverse groups of women, and bring about positive multi-level change in gender norms.

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[35] Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), "Addressing Gender Inclusion."

GENDER-CLIMATE-SECURITY: EXPLORING THE TRIPLE NEXUS

Image credit: Reuters/Asia Pacific

Not only is climate change differentially caused and exacerbated by different groups and states – thus heightening the moral responsibility of those actors and states to immediately act to *halt and address* the devastating effects of the climate crisis – but the impacts of climate change and worsening disasters are not experienced uniformly by people, communities, or states across the globe. Adopting an *intersectional lens** is critical to recognize and address how marginalized and discriminated against groups face heightened vulnerabilities to the impacts of the climate crisis. In particular, diverse groups of women and girls often bear the brunt of the climate crisis' impacts, while concurrently being excluded from participation, decision-making and leadership on critical climate, environment and disaster issues. During climate crisis events, there are frequently increases in sexual harassment, assault, and exploitation and trafficking in persons, with women and girls disproportionately affected. Women's economic, health, infrastructure, food, and water insecurities also frequently increase following disasters, which further impairs the ability of already fragile communities to respond to, recover from, and prepare for future destabilizing events. In particular, we can see heightened and differential vulnerabilities and gendered insecurities when we consider the intersections of gender with an individual's age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, citizenship status, disability status, marital status, motherhood status, and so on.

DEFINING HUMAN SECURITY

In 1994, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defined Human Security as comprising two main aspects: first, safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression; and second, protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, jobs or communities: "Human security means that people can exercise these choices safely and freely--and that they can be relatively confident that the opportunities they have today are not totally lost tomorrow."[36] More recently, United Nations General Assembly resolution 66/290 stated: "Human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people."[37] It calls for "people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people."

> Armed conflict is not our only conflict now. It's also the cyclone, climate change. In a minute everything changes and people are devastated. That's why we need multi-gendered responses.
>
> ~AdiVasu Levu,
> Transcend Oceania, Fiji

Simply looking at the identity characteristic of "gender" is not enough in seeking to address gendered insecurities or advance gender equality. Rather, we must also simultaneously apply an "intersectional lens." The concept of *intersectionality* draws on the work of scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, who in 1989 sought to show how black women in the United States were discriminated against and faced disadvantage due to being simultaneously oppressed and discriminated against as women (sexism) and as black (racism).[38] Expanding upon Crenshaw's black feminist theoretical framework to look at a multitude of identity characteristics, the Centre for Intersectional Justice

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[36] "Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security" (New York: UN Development Programme, 1994), https://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-1994.

[37] United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, "What Is Human Security," United Nations, 2024, https://www.un.org/humansecurity/what-is-human-security/.

[38] Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Policies." University of Chicago Legal Forum 1989, no. 1 (1989): 139-167.

(CIJ) has defined the concept of intersectionality as one which: "describes the ways in which systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class and other forms of discrimination 'intersect' to create unique dynamics and effects."[39] Moreover, as the CIJ notes, "forms of inequality … should be addressed simultaneously to prevent one form of inequality from reinforcing another. For example, tackling the gender pay gap alone – without including other dimensions such as race, socio-economic status and immigration status – will likely reinforce inequalities among women."[40] Understanding intersectionality is critical to ensuring policymaking and programming seeking to achieve gender equality concurrently supports and promotes the achievement of social equality and social justice *for all*.

ADOPTING A HUMAN SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

Government approaches to the climate-security nexus and disaster management will be insufficient where they do not integrate an intersectional gender perspective, highlighting the importance of the human security* framing. A human security / people-centered approach to policy making challenges us to rethink conventional or dominant understandings of security by questioning the idea that security is a homogeneously experienced phenomenon, and by centering humans in security discussions to ask "*who* is (in)secure," "*why* are they (in)secure," and "*who* or *what* poses a threat to their personal security." In the next section, we consider individual and community levels of human (in)security through the "Gender-Climate-Security Indicators'' Framework.
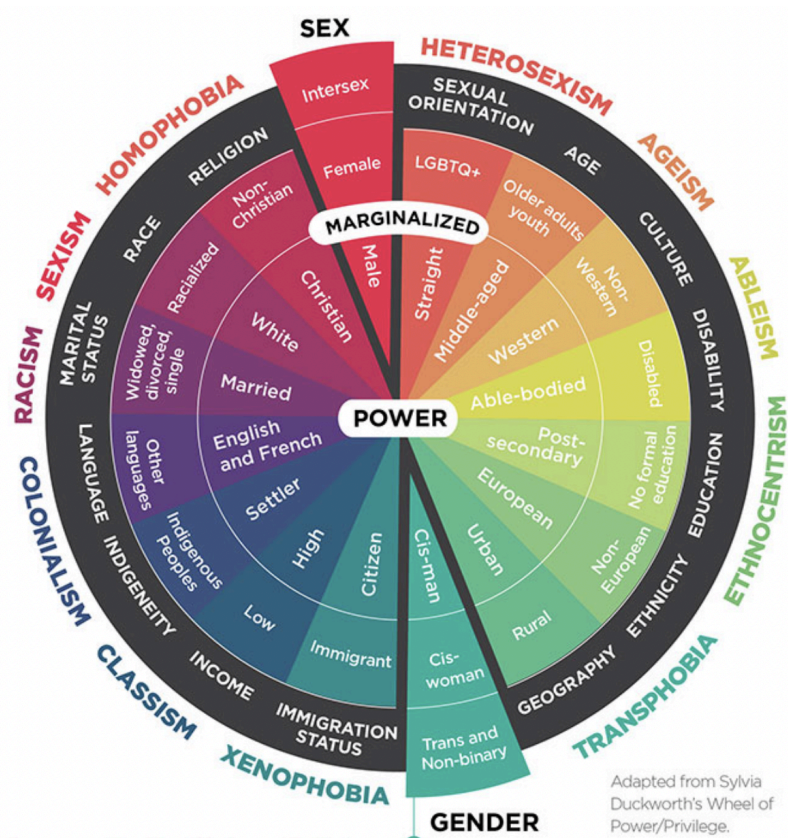

Figure 5: Canadian Institutes of Health Research, adapted from Sylvia Duckworth's Wheel of Power[41]
This adapted "Wheel of Power" diagram shows examples of "identity and social position variables and dimensions, as well as processes of oppression, discrimination, privilege, and power that can be included in intersectional analyses."[42] [43] When an intersectional approach is not integrated in developing gender-responsive and gender-transformative policies and programmes, these complexities will most likely remain unaddressed – or even be exacerbated. Importantly, the Wheel is based on the Canadian context, and thus requires adaptation into other contexts before wider use.

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[39] Centre for Intersectional Justice, "What Is Intersectionality?," 2024, https://www.intersectionaljustice.org/what-is-intersectionality?bbeml=tp-3zSM8cXu3k-DeCWmrukkCQ.jpFRkyVd2Vkux0tAwPYHMMg.ri7gUg8DZaEm_HqbDTn_B1g.lA0kmw1EYo0mmAmYexxeGBg.

[40] Centre for Intersectional Justice, "What Is Intersectionality?"

[41] Canadian Institutes of Health Research, "Meet the Methods Series: Quantitative Intersectional Study Design and Primary Data Collection," February 2021, https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/52352.html.

[42] Canadian Institutes of Health Research, "Meet the Methods Series: Quantitative Intersectional Study Design and Primary Data Collection."

[43] CIHR, "Meet the Methods series"

Overcoming Barriers to Women's Leadership

Harmful gender norms, lack of political will, shrinking civic space, reprisals against women peacebuilders, and intersecting forms of discrimination create barriers in the full participation and leadership of women and girls. Women's leadership in all levels is enhanced through adoption of special measures, dismantling harmful norms, implementing protection measures, as well as dedicated funding and monitoring and evaluation.

~Joeven Reyes,
Sulong PEACE, Philippines

GENDER-CLIMATE-SECURITY INDICATORS

Drawing on the work of Maryruth Belsey Priebe,[44] [45] participants discussed a set of twelve indicators in which the gender-climate-security nexus analysis is particularly pertinent over the course of the in-person workshops. These indicators include Early Warning, Healthcare, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Food Security, Recent Shocks, Employment and Poverty, Standard of Living, Life Expectancy, Education, Infrastructure, State Fragility[46], and Long-Term Adaptation. In turn, building on the discussions and insights forged during both the virtual and in-person workshop sessions, CSO representatives, civil servants, and defense / security personnel collaborated in country groups to co-construct a list of priorities to address in the Gendered Risk Assessment and Action Plan Tool (GRAAPT). These sessions enabled participants to interact and share their own unique domestic and regional expertise, perspectives, and suggestions for gender-transformative disaster response, while in turn drawing on experiences and perspectives shared throughout the workshops from the other countries' representatives.

The following section provides a brief overview of the indicators and examples, whereby an intensification of human insecurities may be evident before, during, and/or following a disaster or climate crisis event. Interspersed are findings from the Project's community survey (see Appendix 1). For brevity, the sections that follow refer to 'women', however women are not a homogenous group. It is imperative that an intersectional lens is applied with regards to the indicators, in order to understand and address the complex impacts on *diverse groups* of women and girls, as well as on people of all genders.

Early Warning*:* Women face significant barriers in accessing and responding to early warning technologies for climate disasters due to various gender-based inequalities. Lower levels of education, limited financial resources, and illiteracy may restrict their use of electricity, mobile phones, and the internet. These factors, compounded by gendered cyber violence, may result in women being

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[44] Disclaimer: The "Gender-Climate-Security Indicators" and "Appendix 3. Gendered Risk Assessment and Action Plan Tool (GRAAPT)" sections of the "Gender in Civil-Military Climate Security and Disaster Response: Co-Creating Gender-Transformative Approaches Amid the Global Climate Crisis Major Report" were originally developed by: Maryruth Belsey Priebe, "Gender All the Way Down: Proposing a Feminist Framework for Analyzing Gendered Climate Security Risks" (Master's Thesis, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, 2022), https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/37373596 The GRAAPT was updated with input from the Project Contributors who may freely use the content for their own purposes. Otherwise, all rights to these sections, including but not limited to their use, reproduction, and distribution, are reserved by Maryruth Belsey Priebe. .

[45] The "Indicators" were developed based on work by: Remmits, Dick, and Rademaker, "Climate Security Assessment."

[46] While included as an indicator in this project, it is important to note critiques which identify how conceptualisations of 'fragility' (as well as 'conflict, 'stability' and 'security') often fail to take into account cultural and political contexts, and therefore are often (problematically) informed by "value-laden judgment(s)". See: Rethinking State Fragility April 2015, The British Academy.

less likely to engage with social media through which they might otherwise receive and act upon early warnings. Furthermore, gender norms may prevent women from making decisions about evacuation. These challenges, coupled with societal expectations that tie women to their homes and burden them with extensive care responsibilities, prevent them from engaging in timely and effective disaster responses. Forty-one percent of survey respondents indicated that they rely on a male family member to make key decisions in disaster contexts.

Health Systems: Climate change exacerbates gender-specific health vulnerabilities and social inequalities, particularly affecting women. Moreover, disaster response planning often overlooks women's needs, leading to lower involvement in recovery efforts and higher mortality. Increased carbon emissions worsen health conditions and drive up healthcare costs, which women in poverty may struggle to afford. Pregnant women face higher risks of health complications during climate events (preterm birth, preeclampsia, hypertension, etc.), while men are more exposed to certain climate-related dangers due to gendered norms and behaviors. Cultural barriers restrict women's access to sexual and reproductive health services, increasing unwanted pregnancies (and associated economic burdens) and sexually transmitted diseases, as well as maternal and infant health risks. Gender inequalities in food distribution heighten girls' and women's food insecurity, and climate disasters have in many communities lead to higher rates of child marriage (due to the financial aspects of doweries and bride prices), resulting in significant health risks related to early pregnancies as well as

Gender Mainstreaming for Improved Health Services in Disasters

Military actors are involved in the provision of health services following disasters. Any such action should adhere to international humanitarian response laws, emphasize gender mainstreaming, and include assessed needs learned through secure information sharing with women's organizations.

*~Nukila Evanty,
Women Working Group, Indonesia*

educational detriments for young girls. Additionally, climate disasters and related crises increase sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), further compromising women's economic and food security and limiting their participation in climate adaptation and decision-making processes. Project survey respondents indicated flooding and cyclones/typhoons to be the two types of natural disasters with the greatest health impact.

WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene): In most cultures, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)-related tasks are predominantly the responsibility of women and girls. Climate change exacerbates gender inequalities by increasing unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) related to WASH tasks through damage to WASH infrastructure and intensification of water shortages, which increase the time and effort required for WASH-related duties. This limits women's and girls' opportunities for education and economic activities, and reinforces socioeconomic disparities. Water shortages also heighten the risks of physical injury (when women carry heavy water loads), psychological stress (related to family expectations for water provisioning), and SGBV (when water provisioning expectations are not met). Furthermore, during journeys for water and fuel, women are often exposed to high rates of sexual harassment and SGBV, which in turn reduces their productivity and ability to work. The lack of adequate WASH facilities impedes women's ability to manage biological needs such as menstruation and pregnancy, perpetuating stigma and limiting access to healthcare and participation in public life. Governmental failure to invest in necessary WASH infrastructure due to climate-stressed budgets further entrenches these gendered power imbalances. Nearly all

of our survey respondents saw a small, moderate, or significant increase in UCDW since the COVID-19 pandemic or recent natural disaster. Relatedly, girls' household tasks increased more than boys'.

Food Security: Climate impacts reduce food quantity and quality, heightening women's malnutrition and associated health risks, especially during pregnancy. Gendered power imbalances in households further exacerbate food insecurity for women, as they often eat last and least. Fluctuating food prices due to climate change disproportionately affect women and children, who are overrepresented in low-income groups. To survive, women often reallocate funds from other necessities such as education or business development, thereby diminishing their overall coping capacity and stability. These combined factors severely impact women's food availability, access, utilization, and stability, leading to broader declines in their well-being and family food security. Moreover, climate change threatens kitchen gardens and livestock (which are often the responsibility of women), making it harder to feed their families. Women's farm work is also often invisible, devalued, and underpaid, leading to their exclusion from climate-smart education programs, which may limit their ability to adapt as the climate changes. Due to gender norms that prevent women from taking out loans or obtaining asset insurance, women are often barred from protecting their farm equipment and are often economically unable to replace lost farm assets. Financial limitations also hinder women's ability to hire additional labor. Fifty percent of survey respondents noted a decrease in food yields in household farms, kitchen gardens, or local marine systems.

> ## Entrusting Food Security to Women-Led Groups
>
> *Following disasters, the PNG Defense Force often works through women's groups who are the safe entry point for security awareness in the community. Following the 2018 earthquake, APNGWLN [Advancing PNG Women Leaders Network] collected 52 pallets of donated items and distributed them in 106 locations in 10 days.*
>
> *~Cathy Alex, Director, Advancing PNG Women Leaders Network Inc., PNG*

Recent / Repeat Shocks & Long-term Adaptability: Immediate disaster relief efforts frequently exclude women from leadership in disaster risk reduction planning (thereby perpetuating gender inequalities), resulting in a general neglect of women's needs, and often increased unpaid care burdens. Access to medical care for women is also often limited post-disaster, leading to long-term health impacts and reduced coping capacity. Women, particularly those with additional vulnerabilities, experience more acute negative health and economic outcomes from repeated climate-related disasters, leading to poorer outcomes in subsequent events. Emotional and psychological resources are also strained by repeated climate shocks, and exacerbated by unpaid care burdens, increasing the risks of mental health crises, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for women. Recent shocks may diminish women's socioeconomic status more than men's after a relocation prompted by a climate disaster, making it harder to manage future crises and compete for jobs or support services. Furthermore, the likelihood of experiencing SGBV rises during disasters, further impairing women's recovery and coping capacity. All of these impacts may influence risk perceptions (and therefore preparation) differently for women and men, with women often perceiving higher risks but lacking the means to take preparatory actions due to gendered power imbalances. Future economic disruptions therefore may force women into maladaptive coping mechanisms such as pulling children out of school or selling off equipment used to generate income. Finally, gender norms limit women's access to crucial financial products such as bank accounts and loans, and they often rely on informal aid networks and predatory loans to survive, which are insufficient for future crisis preparation. More than 75

percent of our survey respondents do not possess insurance for their home or business in times of disaster; household insurance policies are generally in men's names. Moreover, survey respondents noted that people have resorted to a variety of activities to cope with the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, including taking on extra work or an additional business, migrating (temporarily or permanently), pulling out of school, selling assets, letting illnesses go untreated, and taking out loans.

Unemployment / Poverty: As climate-induced strains on government budgets leads to cuts in public benefit services, women's labor is often used as a lever of adjustment as responsibilities for many government support systems (food and water provisioning, child care, medical care for family members, education, and so on) is transferred to women and girls, further reducing their time for paid work and economic activity. This deepens their poverty, leaving them with fewer financial resources for future climate adaptation. Disruptions in local labor markets can make it difficult for men to find new employment, which can lead to fewer emotional resources to cope with further climate shocks. In some contexts, rates of SGBV increase as the rates of male unemployment rise, especially when men's economic status diminishes relative to women's. Adaptive responses to climate change often result in women's resources being depleted first, further deepening their poverty and increasing their exposure to climate risks. The majority of our survey respondents noted that primarily women lost employment following a recent natural disaster or the COVID-19 pandemic. Gender norms exacerbate these challenges, with women often excluded from sustainable livelihood interventions and facing disproportionate job losses and barriers to re-entering the workforce, often trapping women in slave-like working conditions as they migrate for employment in affected sectors like fishing. Nevertheless, climate migration may open new avenues of employment and support for both women and men, and in some cases women's employment opportunities increase as a result.

Standard of Living: Structural inequalities such as pay gaps and over-representation in lower-income groups and informal economic systems result in women relying more on public services. As governments deal with the expense of resilience investments and disaster recovery, they are likely to also implement austerity measures and cuts to these public services on which women rely, thereby lowering their standards of living. Moreover, women, who typically hold more public sector jobs, are disproportionately affected by employment cuts, further reducing their economic stability. Cuts to public services may also lead to increased scapegoating of public service employees, predominantly women, adding to their mental strain. Overall, climate-induced austerity measures intensify gender inequalities, placing additional burdens on women and increasing their susceptibility to climate-related risks. Slightly more than one-third of survey respondents noted restrictions on access to public services due to gender, race, or ethnicity following a recent natural disaster.

Life Expectancy: As the climate crisis intensifies, existing gender inequalities will be exacerbated, leading to severe impacts on women's health, overall well-being, and life expectancies. For instance, economic stress from climate events can increase practices like sex-selective abortion, resulting in lower birth rates for girls. Climate crises also tend to amplify son preference, resulting in higher female child mortality due to inadequate nutrition and healthcare. Intense climate disasters often have higher mortality rates for women, especially where cultural norms restrict their ability to flee or seek help. Women are disproportionately affected by indirect consequences of disasters, such as damage to agriculture and public health systems, leading to higher mortality from poor living conditions and disease. Pre-existing power imbalances limit women's access to resources and reproductive choices, making them more vulnerable to the physical impacts of disasters. The increased demand for unpaid care labor further depletes women's bodies, heightening their susceptibility to future climate risks. Climate crises can increase rates of SGBV, further depleting women's life reserves and reducing life expectancy. Finally, some climate disasters such as floods and typhoons result in higher direct mortality rates due to women's inability to swim or climb trees (skills often necessary for survival).

Education: Climate change exacerbates gender inequalities in education, amplifying women's vulnerability to climate risks. Damage to education infrastructure and loss of teachers (due to disaster-related deaths, out-migration, UCDW burdens, and so on) reduce educational opportunities for girls (and women), limiting their economic stability and resources for future adaptation. Low education levels correlate with higher fertility rates, straining resources and affecting maternal and child health. Families often prioritize boys' education, especially under financial stress, leaving girls more susceptible to future climate shocks. Climate breakdown increases girl's and women's unpaid care burdens, reducing their time for education. Relocation strategies and government budget cuts further hinder women's access to education. Gender norms often prioritize men in climate adaptation training, reducing community resilience without women's participation. Child marriage as a coping strategy further restricts girls' education and reinforces gender inequalities. Education perpetuating patriarchal norms can lead to increased rates of SGBV and discriminatory practices among men and boys. The majority of survey respondents noted some level of loss of school infrastructure or programming following a recent natural disaster or the COVID-19 pandemic.

Infrastructure: Climate-damaged infrastructure, including electricity, telecommunications, transportation, water / sewage, housing, education infrastructure, and others, typically increases human insecurities in many ways. Energy insecurity exacerbates women's UCDW burdens. With climate change anticipated to damage energy infrastructure, the poorest (often women) are likely to be impacted the most as lack of electricity tends to intensify women's drudgery, hinder learning, increase air pollution, increase injury risks, and raise rates of SGBV. Transportation systems are frequently designed around masculine work schedules, forcing women into trip-chaining and on to slower transit routes, reducing time for work or UCDW. Transportation investments prioritize high-cost systems benefiting private vehicle owners (typically men), neglecting improvements to routes used by women such as public transit, dirt roads and walkways, and bicycle lanes, leading to more complex and time-consuming commutes for women. While homes are often "women's domains" (where they engage in UCDW and economic activity), climate change is likely to result in decreases in government housing support programs as funds are shifted to crisis response. Gender norms may also confine women to their homes or prevent them from making decisions about preparing to leave in response to climate shocks, increasing vulnerability. Finally, the development of new infrastructure projects often excludes women from consultations, and employment opportunities related to new infrastructure rarely benefit women. Furthermore, infrastructure construction projects may increase SGBV rates due to an influx of men into a region. Many survey respondents note reductions in the conditions and functionality of public infrastructure following a recent natural disaster, including telecommunications, public transportation and markets, piped water and sewage systems.


Image Credit: Construction Briefing

3D Mapping Project: Gendered Human Insecurity x Infrastructure

The 3D Mapping results highlight how poor existing conditions, such as roads prone to flooding or erosion, can limit access to services and resources needed to survive and recover from climate disasters, such as safe escape routes or health facilities. As in many global communities, there are challenges with safe road networks in local villages. While in many Indo-Pacific countries, national and regional road networks tend to be concrete or asphalt and smooth surfaces, reports of local road networks that are unpaved, steep, potholed, and flooded are common. Despite higher mobility and transportation needs which require more frequent travel over longer distances, women travel by foot on unpaved roads more often than men.

The Indonesia site is an Indigenous area experiencing increasing environmental security risks associated with nearby logging and land development. Internet access and phone signals were intermittent in the area. A low-cost drone was later used to capture a 1 km stretch of village road in dry conditions – this unpaved road to the farm is in rough and poor condition, requiring about an hour of travel by motorbike. The data collector's community had recently experienced flooding and landslides (more common due to logging) after heavy rains, resulting in chest-high water inside the home and unusable roads. The village has one small market stall about 1 km from the data collector's home. It sells low value, low nutrition packaged goods such as instant noodles and other dry goods. Due to the lack of electricity, batteries and headlamps are also sold. The village has a health clinic building approximately 2.5 hour motorbike ride away, however there is limited staff and medicine, and no diagnostic equipment. It takes 7 hours to travel by local roads to the nearest hospital.
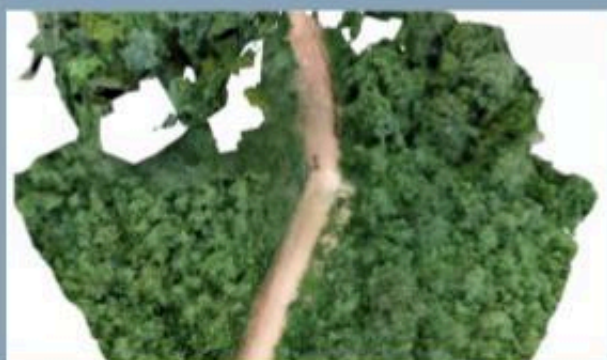
These images were collected as part of the 3D Mapping Project conducted by the Pacific Forum WPS Fellowship Team. One local Indigenous woman from each site was taught to use free and open source geospatial tools and smart phones to visualize the experience of roadways, family farms, and local markets, healthcare facilities, and schools. The photos and other data collected by each woman was processed into 3D maps of the sites. These "digital twins" are exact replicas or reconstructions of selected environments. By extracting special data from photos and geospatial data collection, these 3D maps allow for a more true-to-life study of the conditions in local villages that may impact residents before or during a climate disaster. Shown here are the results of the project, with an unpaved village road under dry conditions (left) and a village market within 1 km of the data collector's home (right).

Image credit: Bikepacking Adventure CC0/Wikimedia

Human (In)Security is Innately Linked with Community, Societal, National, and International (In)Security

Research has shown that higher levels of *human insecurity* are intrinsically interlinked with and mutually inform higher levels of national and international insecurity. Hudson, Bowen and Nielsen and colleagues developed a theoretical framework showing that, "societies that are highly subordinative of women end up with far worse governments, demographics, economic performance, environmental preservation and health outcomes."[47] Moreover, "the higher the level of violence against women, the more likely a country may be to not comply with international norms and treaty agreements, and the less peacefully it will operate in the international system."[48] Gender inequities and intersectional discrimination against women directly relate to and influence national insecurity, in part because when it is acceptable to use violence in the home to solve disagreements, violence is more likely to be used for national level disagreements. In communities where harmful gender norms continue to disadvantage women, individual *and* community level resilience and adaptability are harmed, such as through reduced collective capacities to mitigate and withstand climate-related disasters and shocks. In regions where investments in women's human security are insufficient, women will be less capable of contributing to system-level resources and tools that support climate security and aid in preventing climate-related conflicts.[49] These disparities are likely to increase further following climate disasters such as heatwaves, floods, forest fires, sea level rise and extreme weather. Conversely, research has shown that more peaceful environments can be achieved through greater levels of gender equality: "higher gender equality corresponds with a country's lower likelihood of using military force to resolve disputes with other countries, … as well as with a lower severity of violence used in international conflict."[50]

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[47] Valerie M. Hudson, Donna Lee Bowen, and Perpetua Lynne Nielsen, "The Effects by the Numbers: The Syndrome and Measures of National Outcome," in *The First Political Order*, How Sex Shapes Governance and National Security Worldwide (Columbia University Press, 2020), 179–310, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/huds19466.11.

[48] Catalina Crespo-Sancho, "The Role of Gender in the Prevention of Violent Conflict," *World Bank* Background paper for the United Nations-World Bank Flagship Study, Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict (2017), https://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/can-gender-equality-prevent-violent-conflict.

[49] Erika Forsberg and Louise Olsson, "Examining Gender Inequality and Armed Conflict at the Subnational Level," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6, no. 2 (June 17, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogaa023.

[50] Crespo-Sancho, "The Role of Gender in the Prevention of Violent Conflict."

Recognizing that gender norms are multitudinous and evolving in their expressions across the Indo-Pacific, the following is a brief discussion of the ways gender inequalities may intersect with other security conditions to increase national and international threats. The analysis is based on the same gender-climate-security framework developed by Maryruth Belsey Priebe, as referenced above.[51]

Crime / small-scale violence

As climate change intensifies, criminal activity may intensify, and simultaneously be more overlooked by law enforcement due to overwhelming climate- or health-related crisis response, or government cutbacks. The persistent gender gap in violent crime is well-documented: men commit most homicides and other violent crimes.[52] Nevertheless, women's participation in criminal activity has moderately increased in recent decades. In organized crime and violent extremism, typically men will play outsized roles in leadership and violence, while women serve in auxiliary positions.[53] Climate change may increase crime on a variety of fronts. In healthcare, such crimes involve petty theft of medicines, trade in counterfeit medical supplies, and corruption in medical systems. In food and water security, there may be elite- or criminal/rebel group capture or securitization of resources. Influxes of climate adaptation and resilience funding may fuel corruption and organized crime.

Anti-state grievances

Women and men may participate in public uprisings differently. In general, studies show that women most often engage when conditions are relatively safe, while men are more likely to engage even if the uprising group engages in aggressive or violent behavior.[54] The inability of men (especially those who are young) to reach culturally defined masculine milestones (such as to earn a living, marry, establish a home, and have children) may encourage some to take part in violent demonstrations or be recruited into organized crime groups, gangs, and terrorist organizations as a way of achieving lost status. Still, issues such as water and food shortages, and increasingly the climate crisis as a global issue, are intense enough to motivate some women to contradict certain gender norms and engage in violent protest.

Tensions between groups

Climate-related environmental conditions such as flooding, forest fires, heat waves, and resource scarcity, as well as shifts in key social and economic dynamics like population demographics, are likely to strain long-standing intergroup relationships across the globe, and may result in conflict. As with anti-state grievances, young men are at greater risk of being recruited into non-state groups, terrorist organizations, or paramilitaries if they are frustrated by their inability to reach certain, gender-specific milestones.

State-to-state conflict and war

Historically, men have been the predominant actors in state-to-state conflict and war, however, research has shown that, while women combatants are comparatively rare, women have been increasingly involved in paramilitary and armed insurgent groups.[55] Alongside men's disproportionate representation as actors in war and conflict, in 2022

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[51] Belsey Priebe, "Gender All the Way Down: Proposing a Feminist Framework for Analyzing Gendered Climate Security Risks."

[52] Hua (Sara) Zhong et al., "Understanding Women's Antisocial and Criminal Behavior: A Global Review," in *The Cambridge Handbook of the International Psychology of Women*, ed. Diane F. Halpern and Fanny M. Cheung, Cambridge Handbooks in Psychology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 402–16, https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-handbook-of-the-international-psychology-of-women/understanding-womens-antisocial-and-criminal-behavior/347B3A71BF84ADCC9098A6023888F498.

[53] Annette Hübschle, "Of Bogus Hunters, Queenpins and Mules: The Varied Roles of Women in Transnational Organized Crime in Southern Africa," *Trends in Organized Crime* 17, no. 1 (June 1, 2014): 31–51, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12117-013-9202-8.

[54] Yandisa Sikweyiya and Sebenzile Nkosi, "Violent Protests and Gendered Identities," *African Safety Promotion Journal* 15, no. 1 (June 2017): 1–7.

[55] Jakana L Thomas and Reed M Wood, "The Social Origins of Female Combatants," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 35, no. 3 (May 2018): 215–32, https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894217695524.

peace agreements only 16 percent of total peace negotiation participants were women, and the needs of women and girls were included in only 33 percent of agreements. Yet studies show that when women participate meaningfully in peace processes, the chances of a peace agreement failing decrease by 35 percent.[56] As such, it is a moral imperative and strategic advantage to include women in all peace negotiations. In fact, studies have shown that disagreements over natural resources (such as water), claims to land, or movements of people can instigate a heightened interest in diplomacy and peacemaking.[57] Critically, a gender perspective and women's participation must be centered in environmental peacebuilding processes.

Climate and Conflict in a Vicious Feedback Cycle

Overall, we need a holistic approach. Climate impacts conflict, and conflict impacts climate.

~Shebana Alqaseer, Bayi Inc, Philippines

As demonstrated in this section, adopting a *gendered intersectional* human security perspective, and centering those most discriminated against or vulnerable, encourages a more comprehensive understanding and response to the gender-climate-security nexus across multiple interlinked levels – individual, community, society, state and international. When diverse groups of women are excluded from climate security planning and policymaking, their myriad perspectives and needs are invisibilized. However, when women are empowered in consultations and meaningfully involved in disaster planning (as well as climate governance, diplomacy, peacebuilding and so on) individual and community vulnerability to disaster and climate-related insecurities stands to decrease. Including women in climate security planning can play a profound role in re-balancing gendered power structures, further stabilizing societies. In sum, given the complicated ways in which climate breakdown will impact human insecurities, and recognizing the centrality of human security to enhancing stability within communities during crises, it is imperative to adopt an intersectional gender perspective when seeking to understand the risks and vulnerabilities of a community in disaster planning and management.

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[56] Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, "Recognizing Women Peacebuilders: CRITICAL ACTORS IN EFFECTIVE PEACEMAKING" (International Civil Society Action Network, 2020), https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ICAN_RecognizingWomenPeacebuilders.pdf.
[57] Manzoor Ahmad, Adil Khan, and Muhammad Imran Mehsud, "When States Go Thirsty: A Critical Analysis of Water War Thesis," *Global Strategic and Securities Studies Review* II, no. I (December 30, 2017): 1–8, https://doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2017(II-I).01.

INTERNATIONAL LAWS AND FRAMEWORKS

International laws and frameworks play crucial roles in normatively and practically guiding how gender perspectives are applied within disaster management, climate policy and HA/DR policy and programming at the regional, national and local levels. Instruments including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) framework and Sendai Gender Action Plan, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Sphere Standards emphasize the importance of considering gender dynamics in crisis contexts, including HA/DR planning and execution, and specifically provide guidance regarding how to address the needs and vulnerabilities of diverse women and marginalized gender groups in emergencies. Another major global gender equality and women's empowerment framework, which we address in greater depth below, is the United Nations Women, Peace and Security agenda. By incorporating these legal and policy frameworks, communities' and states' HA/DR responses stand to become more inclusive, effective, and equitable. However, these laws and frameworks are by no means interpreted or adopted uniformly, nor may their adoption necessarily result in gender-transformative outcomes if the root causes of intersectional gender inequality, and harmful structures and systems, are not simultaneously addressed. Indeed, policies themselves can always be further strengthened over time.

When International Law Fails

We abide by global policy that we don't analyze further how the communities are affected. That doesn't determine if they need the help or not. What gives you the right to decide which household is more deserving. Emotionally, they are all affected.

~AdiVasu Levu,
Transcend Oceania

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) – CEDAW, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, obligates states parties to take measures to ensure women's equal rights and opportunities in all spheres of life, including disaster risk reduction through General Recommendation 37.[58] The Convention defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."[59] It is often described as an international bill of rights for women, and underscores the importance of addressing gender-based discrimination and violence, including ensuring women's participation in decision-making processes and providing access to essential services such as healthcare and psychosocial support during emergencies.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 & Sendai Gender Action Plan
The Sendai Framework was the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda and provides Member States with concrete actions to protect development gains from the risk of disaster. "It recognizes that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders including local government, the private sector and other

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[58]United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women," accessed March 8, 2021, https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx.
[59] United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

stakeholders."[60] The Sendai Framework works synergistically with the other 2030 Agenda agreements, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the New Urban Agenda, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Although critiqued for not sufficiently integrating gender responsive approaches,[61] the recently adopted Gender Action Plan (GAP) to Support Implementation of the Sendai Framework (2024) comprehensively and specifically "aims to promote meaningful participation, empowerment and leadership of women, women's organizations and other gender equality and inclusion stakeholders, by strengthening their technical capacities to engage in disaster risk governance institutions and processes at all levels."[62] The GAP is therefore a promising framework for generating greater public and governmental understanding of gendered insecurities in disaster and climate contexts, and influencing more proactive gender-responsive and gender-transformative policymaking and programming.

Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, and "provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership."[63] While all Goals are critical to achieve for more peaceful, secure and sustainable ecosystems, particularly relevant Goals with respect to the gender-climate-security nexus include: Goal 5: Gender Equality – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 13: Climate Change – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; and Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

> *Stories and values underline everything we do in regard to land boundary identification ...*
>
> ~Cathy Alex, Advancing PNG Women Leaders Network

Sphere & Sphere Standards

Established in 1997, Sphere promotes the dignity and rights of crisis-affected people through a framework for principled, accountable and quality humanitarian action. Within the Sphere Standards is the Humanitarian Charter and a set of Minimum Standards to be applied contextually in all humanitarian crises. Today, Sphere resources are primary reference tools for national and international NGOs, UN agencies, and governments.[64] The Sphere Standards explicitly include gender as a cross-cutting theme in humanitarian response, highlighting the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women, girls, and LGBTQ+ individuals during emergencies. They provide guidance on ensuring equal access to shelter, water, sanitation, and healthcare services, as well as protection from gender-based violence. The framework emphasizes the importance of consulting and engaging with women and marginalized gender groups in decision-making processes.

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[60] "Sendai Framework at a Glance," PreventionWeb, March 18, 2015, https://www.preventionweb.net/sendai-framework/sendai-framework-at-a-glance.

[61] "A Review of Gender and the Sendai Framework | UNDRR" (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, April 17, 2023), http://www.undrr.org/publication/review-gender-and-sendai-framework.

[62] UN WOMEN, "CSW68: Pacific Perspectives on the Gender Action Plan to Support Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030," March 15, 2024, https://www.preventionweb.net/event/csw68-pacific-perspectives-gender-action-plan-support-implementation-sendai-framework.

[63] United Nations, "The 17 Goals," United Nations, 2024, https://sdgs.un.org/goals.

[64] "About Sphere," Sphere, accessed March 8, 2024, https://spherestandards.org/about/.

Customary Laws, Disaster Responses, and Women's Climate Security

While in global policy circles formalized international laws and frameworks are arguably afforded primacy in discussions and debates, there is a need for substantially greater recognition, learning and understanding – by all members of a society or state – of domestic traditional and customary laws, including the unique meanings and significance that gender, environment, nature, and climate might hold. Self-determination is enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and customary law represents a form of self-governance, one which "is hugely empowering in many Indigenous communities because it is a form of social organization and justice that maintains and sustains traditions that go back millennia."[65] Significantly, "customary law is not frozen in the past, but a living, changing system that reflects its times, and will continue to grow and change, just as the common law continues to grow and change."[66] However, certain challenges in enforcing or maintaining customary laws in the Indo-Pacific region include legal pluralism, jurisdictional conflicts, and the erosion of traditional knowledge due to urbanization and globalization.

In some states, authorities seek to integrate customary laws with formal legal mechanisms and common law. This might be approached through capacity-building programs, community-based approaches, and policy reforms, and through dialogues and relationship-building between governments, civil society organizations, and Indigenous communities. In many contexts, harmonizing customary law with national policies may serve to strengthen the preservation and learning of Indigenous knowledge and practices, which may be invaluable for disaster response, climate change adaptation, and environmental protection.

However, there are also important problems associated with integrating common law and customary law. First, customary law may be insufficiently respected by (a substantial number of) members of the citizenry and / or governing authorities of a state. If the governing state does not recognize or preserve the standing of customary law(s), Indigenous persons and groups may feel (further) alienated and disempowered. Moreover, instances of non-compatibility or

Women and maritime and marine resource customary laws

In many Asian and Pacific Island countries, maritime environmental crimes are addressed within the context of customary laws, which are deeply rooted in cultural and societal norms. Customary marine resource management laws regulate land and resource ownership, impacting access to vital resources necessary for climate adaptation and health services. These laws, developed and maintained by local communities for generations, are based on Indigenous knowledge, cultural values, and social norms. They allow for sustainable utilization of marine resources while ensuring conservation for future generations. Women often play significant roles in the development and implementation of customary laws related to maritime, climate, and health security. They contribute to shaping customary laws concerning land tenure, resource management, and disaster preparedness. Additionally, women maintain and transmit indigenous knowledge related to environmental stewardship, sustainable agriculture, and health practices. Despite their contributions, women may face disadvantages under customary land tenure systems, limiting their access to resources and decision-making processes, particularly following natural disasters.

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[65] Tom Calma, "Integration of Customary Law into the Australian Legal System: Calma" (Speech, National Indigenous Legal Conference, 2013), https://humanrights.gov.au/about/news/speeches/integration-customary-law-australian-legal-system-calma.
[66] Calma, "Integration of Customary Law into the Australian Legal System: Calma."

non-alignment between customary laws and national or international legal frameworks may exist, in particular with regard to understandings of and relationships to the land, environment, and climate. Integration may also be logistically challenging where a formal centralized repository of laws does not exist. As noted by Filipino participants in the workshops, the plurality of Indigenous groups with unique cultures and practices can also generate challenges for harmonizing engagements with legal systems among diverse groups.

> **All Leaders Must Be Engaged**
>
> Sometimes tribal leaders are stronger than the police, so civil society and the defense force will work together.
>
> ~Ruth Kissam, Advancing PNG Women Leaders Network

Alongside these important issues, in countries across Asia and the Pacific, common discriminatory gender norms persist both within common law frameworks as well as within traditional socio-cultural and legal frameworks. Despite strides in gender and leadership inclusivity, some entrenched structures continue to pose challenges. For instance, in many contexts women are (still) often relegated to listening, rather than equally speaking out or leading. Common, if contextually different, issues such as these highlight the need for multi-stakeholder engagement to bridge formal, informal and traditional systems, to harness positive practices but also address pressing gender equity and social justice concerns, including in disaster and climate crisis contexts.

Ultimately, there is a need for the adoption of less prescriptive, more collaborative approaches in any effort to promote the coexistence of traditional and modern legal frameworks. Any alignment of customary laws together with common law requires adopting a people-centered approach that emphasizes Indigenous peoples' unique knowledge, needs, wants, and agency to self-regulate. It should also recognize and respond to the unique impacts which Indigenous groups may face – as determined by those groups – in the context of the gender-climate-security nexus, but also centrally advance the human rights and security of women, as well as their inclusion, participation and leadership in communities' disaster risk reduction and management efforts.

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda

As noted, the WPS Agenda is a major international Framework underpinned by ten United Security Council Resolutions. The WPS Agenda evolved from the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, adopted unanimously on October 31, 2000. UNSCR 1325 addresses both the disproportionate impacts of war on women, as well as "the pivotal role women should and do play in conflict prevention, conflict management and sustainable peace efforts".[67] UNSCR 1325's framework consists of four pillars—participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. The WPS agenda recognizes the unique experiences of women and girls in crises and conflict situations, including their heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Under the relief and recovery pillar, it calls for the participation of women in all aspects of humanitarian response and reconstruction.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) encourages national-level implementation of UNSCR 1325 through National Action Plans (NAPs). NAPs are strategic documents outlining a government's approach to localizing action on the WPS Agenda, addressing objectives such as securing the rights of women and girls in conflict, preventing violence, and ensuring women's meaningful participation in peace processes. Since the first NAP was produced in 2005, 107 countries

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[67] "2023 Women, Peace and Security Strategy and National Action Plan" (2023),
https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/U.S.-Strategy-and-National-Action-Plan-on-Women-Peace-and-Security.pdf.

have developed subsequent generations of NAPs, and some regions have launched Regional Plans of Action, often aligning them with other national development and gender equality policies. Still, NAP approaches to planning, development, and implementation vary significantly in focus, timeline, content, and monitoring frameworks. Furthermore, the integration of climate crisis, disaster, humanitarian and environmental issues within NAPs varies

WPS Regional Plans of Action

It has been noted that "the WPS agenda has shown that while there are different goalposts for different countries, regional challenges require regional cooperation." There have been two WPS RPAs produced in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands region: the Pacific Regional Action Plan on WPS (2012-2015) outlined strategies for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment across the Pacific region, addressing issues such as violence against women, economic empowerment, and political participation. Meanwhile, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted a Regional Plan of Action in 2022 to promote gender equality and women's rights within its member states, aiming to enhance women's participation in decision-making processes and eliminate gender-based violence, and address non-traditional security threats including climate change and disasters.

significantly from state to state.

The Women Peace and Security Humanitarian Action Compact

The WPS Humanitarian Action Compact was launched in 2021 at the Generation Equality Forum and as of 2024 has more than 215 Signatories, "including countries, regional organizations, UN entities and civil society: women and youth organizations and networks, academic institutions and private sector."[68] The Compact focuses on implementing WPS and humanitarian action commitments by:
- "Establishing a voluntary monitoring and accountability process to realize existing WPS-HA commitments.
- Strengthening coordination across existing WPS-HA mechanisms, systems, networks, partnerships and capacities.
- Promoting financing for and wider awareness and visibility of the women, peace and security agenda and on gender equality in humanitarian action."[69]

WPS NATIONAL ACTION PLANS
Of the seven Project participant states, three have produced WPS National Action Plans: Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Indonesia launched its first National Action Plan (NAP) in 2014 for the period 2014-2019, issued as a Presidential Decree, and referred to as RAN P3A-KS. An updated NAP (RAN P3A-KS II) was adopted in July 2021 (covering 2020-2025). Meanwhile, the Philippines was the first country in Asia that adopted a WPS NAP, implemented for the period 2010-2016. The Philippines adopted its second WPS NAP in 2014, and its third for the period 2017-2022,

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[68] Generation Equality, "Women, Peace & Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) Compact," no date, https://forum.generationequality.org/women-peace-security-and-humanitarian-action-wps-ha-compact.
[69] Generation Equality, "Women, Peace & Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) Compact."

> **CSOs Link Government to Communities**
>
> *Having civil society representation in policymaking is needed to ensure that policies are tailored for respective communities because community members are the ones who live with the challenges of climate change every day. CSOs are the link from government to the communities, and hold governments accountable.*
>
> ~Ms. Litea Gavidi, Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration, Fiji

developed through a participatory approach that included consultations with civil society organizations. The fourth WPS NAP spans 2023 to 2033, and, "represents the Philippines' renewed commitment to recognizing the dynamic and complex roles played by women of diverse and intersecting identities before, during, and after conflict. These roles encompass active participation as peace agents, leaders, survivors, and vulnerable sectors."[70] Vietnam adopted its first and current WPS NAP in 2024 for the period 2024-2030, and aims to "promote gender equality, improve the role, position, voice, rights and obligations, and responsibilities of women when they participate in peace and security matters."[71]

Other Policy Approaches to Gender Equality

The following section provides a brief overview of other policy approaches to advancing gender equality which the project participant countries (currently without WPS NAPs) have adopted.

Fiji

The 2023-2028 National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against All Women and Girls is the first of two five-year plans intended to advance the Government of Fiji's long-term commitment to prevent violence against all women and girls.[72] Five key strategies will be employed to comprehensively address violence: transformative public education and social norm change, strengthening of equal and respectful relationships, survivor-centered services for survivors of violence, coordinated legal protection for survivors of violence, and fostering a gender equal society. However, climate elements are not mentioned in this NAP**.**

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[70] Philippine Government, "Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2023-2033," 2023, https://wps.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Philippines_NAPWPS-2023-2033.pdf.

[71] Giang Huong, "Gov't Approves National Action Program on Women, Peace and Security," *Socialist Republic of Vietnam Government News*, January 26, 2024, https://en.baochinhphu.vn/govt-approves-national-action-program-on-women-peace-and-security-111240126210500761.htm.

[72] "Fiji National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against All Women and Girls (VAWG) 2023-2028" (Government of Fiji), accessed June 13, 2024, https://sites.google.com/view/fijinap/home.

Papua New Guinea

The National Policy for Women and Gender Equality, 2011–2015, describes the government's mission to promote improved equality, participation, and empowerment of women. Meanwhile, the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence 2016-2025 cites UNSCR 1325 as an international commitment to which the Strategy is aligned.[73] PNG's Vision 2050; the Development Strategic Plan (DSP), 2010–2030; and the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), 2011–2015, outline broad aspirations about gender equality, but arguably offer few concrete targets for mainstreaming gender issues across sectors and programs. It should also be noted that the Autonomous Region of Bougainville has produced a Policy for Women's Empowerment, Gender Equality, Peace and Security.[74]

Thailand

Although Thailand has not yet produced WPS NAP, one is currently being developed.[75] Thailand's 2015 Gender Equality Act protects individuals from gender-based discrimination. Thailand's Women Development Strategy (2017-2021), developed by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, sets out goals, objectives and targets in the area of gender equality which will be steering tools for effective budget allocations. The National Consultation on Women's Leadership and Peace and Security in December 2018 organized by UN Women led to the institutionalization of the Coordination Center for Children and Women in Southern Border Provinces (CCCW-SBP) in July 2019.

Vanuatu

Vanuatu has adopted the National Sustainable Development Plan 2016 to 2030, as well as the National Gender Equality Policy 2020-2030 and Implementation Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy 2020-2025.[76] Vanuatu also has adopted the Vanuatu Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child & Adolescent Health Policy, Strategy & Implementation Plan 2021-2025. Although Vanuatu is considered a global leader on climate change, it lags on gender and social justice issues, and does not currently have a National Human Rights Institution.[77]

An Inclusive Development of Project Participant Country WPS NAPs?

Scholars have noted the importance of consulting widely with myriad stakeholders who may be affected by conflict, disasters, and other humanitarian emergencies in the development – as well as monitoring and evaluation – of WPS action plans. In particular, it is imperative that the perspectives, experiences and knowledge of diverse groups of women and women's civil society groups regarding individual and community needs and concerns directly inform the development of WPS NAPs.[78] Positively, consultations for the development of the WPS NAPs in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam included a diverse range of stakeholders, including civil society and non-governmental actors. According to UN Women, a consultation for Indonesia's second WPS NAP, led by AMAN Indonesia, "brought together

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[73] "Papua New Guinea National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence 2016-2025" (PNG Minister for Religion, Youth & Community Development, 2016), https://femilipng.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Strategy-to-Prevent-and-Respond-to-GBV.pdf.

[74] "Policy for Women's Empowerment, Gender Equality, Peace and Security" (The Autonomous Region of Bougainville, August 2016), https://www.wpsnaps.org/app/uploads/2019/09/Bougainville-Gender-Equality-Peace-and-Security-policy-2016.pdf.

[75] "Workshop on Women Peace and Security's Monitoring & Evaluation Framework and Coordination Mechanism (Thailand)," WPS-ASEAN, accessed June 13, 2024, https://wps.asean.org/events/workshop-on-women-peace-and-securitys-monitoring-evaluation-framework-and-coordination-mechanism-thailand/ .

[76] "Gender Equality Brief for Vanuatu" (UN Women, 2020), https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/UN_WOMEN_VANUATU.pdf.

[77] "Vanuatu: Leading on Climate, Lagging on Gender" (Amnesty International, April 2024), https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ASA4472652023ENGLISH.pdf.

[78] "What We Learnt from Analysing Twenty Years of Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans," *LSE Women, Peace and Security Blog* (blog), March 30, 2020, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/wps/2020/03/30/what-we-learnt-from-analysing-twenty-years-of-women-peace-and-security-national-action-plans/.

WPS multi-sector stakeholders from the government, communities and civil society in the field. It involved more than 200 representatives of civil society across 24 provinces in Indonesia."[79] The Philippines also has a strong record as a leader in advancing the WPS agenda, with an emphasis on collaboration with civil society, including multi-sectoral. Meanwhile, consultations on Vietnam's first WPS NAP involved, "government leaders, officials, and representatives from various ministries, international organizations, UN agencies, provinces, academia, and social organizations, numbering over 200."[80]

Integration of Climate Change and Disasters in WPS NAPs

Applied Theory a Must for Effective Disaster Response

There is a widening gap between theory and practice to make tangible actions on the ground.

~Priyatma Singh,
The University of Fiji

The importance of integrating climate change, disasters and environment issues in WPS NAPs has been highlighted by a range of scholars.[81] However, there remains a broad degree of difference between states in current NAPs, ranging from states which do not include climate change, disasters and environment at all, to those which robustly address these issues. In a 2024 study, of the 87 countries with a (WPS) NAP, only 23 (26.4 percent of countries) referred to climate change.[82] Regarding the Project participant countries that have produced WPS NAPs, an integration of climate, disaster and environment themes appears to be mixed. For instance, the second Indonesian WPS NAP (RAN P3A-KS II: 2020-2025, published in Bahasa Indonesia) "incorporates emerging and non-traditional security issues deemed as priorities for

Indonesia, including the prevention of violent extremism (PVE), intolerance and radicalization, land disputes and the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation, including false news and hate speech online."[83] Thus, there seems to be space for Indonesia to place a more central focus on addressing climate and disaster issues in its WPS NAP.

Meanwhile, the Philippines WPS NAP 2023-2033 includes a robust integration of climate change and climate security. An expert in WPS, Disaster and Climate Security was involved in a WPS consultation workshop and the vetting of the NAP draft.[84] The NAP also notes a key feature was the adoption of "future-proofing strategies to be resilient to both existing and emerging new realities" including through enhancing indicators by recognizing climate change as a security concern that can "complicate conflict dynamics and exacerbate resulting (and existing) inequalities, marginalization, and insecurity."[85] For Vietnam, the WPS NAP primarily "aims to help women better deal with gender-based violence; integrate gender dimensions into rescue and recovery operations such as war consequence handling, prevention and

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[79] UN WOMEN, "Women, Peace and Security in Indonesia," Country Brief, 2023, https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/wps_country_brief_indonesia_20230329.pdf.

[80] United Nations Vietnam, "National Consultation Workshop in Viet Nam Marks a Key Milestone in the Development of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security," November 6, 2023, https://vietnam.un.org/en/251886-national-consultation-workshop-viet-nam-marks-key-milestone-development-national-action-plan.

[81] Elizabeth Seymour Smith, "Climate Change in Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans," SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, June 2020), https://www.sipri.org/publications/2020/sipri-insights-peace-and-security/climate-change-women-peace-and-security-national-action-plans.

[82] Maryruth Belsey Priebe, "Women Parliamentarians' Impact in Indo-Pacific Gender-Responsive and Climate-Compatible Security Policy Making," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, March 12, 2024, 68.

[83] UN WOMEN, "Women, Peace and Security in Indonesia."

[84] Philippine Government, "Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2023-2033."

[85] Philippine Government, "Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2023-2033."

handling of disasters and non-traditional security challenges; and enhance international cooperation in women, peace, and security,"[86] indicating a balanced approach to including climate and disaster threats.

Challenges often remain in translating theory to practice. Ultimately, within a broader regional context of states' heightened vulnerability to climate change and disasters, as countries participating in the workshop look at developing their own WPS NAPs, it is imperative that comprehensive references and responses to climate events, disasters, as well as environmental and clean energy challenges, are concretely and substantively integrated. Indeed, as the section below reveals, gender-responsive approaches to Indo-Pacific defense and security climate action plans are also sorely lacking.

Whole-of-Government Required

A comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach is crucial. For WPS to work effectively, commitments, input, and operationalization through both the whole of government and the whole of society are necessary.

~Dr. Karell Calpito, Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (PCHRD)

INDO-PACIFIC DEFENSE AND SECURITY CLIMATE ACTION, ADAPTATION, & GENDER EQUALITY PLANS

Despite the inextricable links between gender inequality, human (in)security, and national security, virtually no Indo-Pacific country has developed a defense and security climate action/adaptation plan that addresses gendered insecurities in a substantive manner, and there even remains a troubling lack of climate crisis integration in most Indo-Pacific Women, Peace and Security (WPS) NAPs.[87] Militaries may also have a climate response action plan not only to prepare military infrastructure, operations, and personnel for the changing environment, but also for reducing the risk of climate-related disruptions and supporting national, and global climate mitigation and resilience efforts. These plans could (but generally do not) include disaster management strategies. Even if they do, they rarely address gendered vulnerabilities.

For instance, in the U.S. Department of the Navy Climate Action 2030, Line of Effort 5 calls for the enhancement of mitigation and adaptation through collaboration, noting in particular the need to, "work with allies and international partners, including security organizations and other stakeholders, to integrate climate into security cooperation and affirmatively build climate resilience in areas of the world that are most susceptible to climate-induced conflicts, humanitarian disasters, or acute climate impacts such as water and food insecurity or migration pressures."[88] However, it does not explicitly mention gender or the need to consult with women. Meanwhile, the U.S. 2023 Women, Peace, and Security Strategy and National Action Plan, which applies to all U.S. Department of Defense activities, does focus on partnerships, and Line of Effort 5 in the 2023 WPS NAP encourages the mainstreaming of WPS principles through support of "multilateral, regional, and local organizations including civil society and local women leaders."[89] Taken together, the fifth lines of effort in both documents offer federal guidance that reinforces the need to consult with women and women's organizations in planning for climate-related hazards. However, this consultation and inclusion should be mainstreamed through *all* climate and disaster policies.

The United States is not the only country in the Indo-Pacific lacking in a gender-sensitive defense and security action plan for climate disasters. While all seven of the Project participant countries have developed some kind of climate adaptation

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[86] Huong, "Gov't Approves National Action Program on Women, Peace and Security."
[87] Belsey Priebe, "Women Parliamentarians' Impact in Indo-Pacific Gender-Responsive and Climate-Compatible Security Policy Making."
[88] Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations, and Environment, "Department of the Navy Climate Action 2030," May 2022, https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/Press-Releases/display-pressreleases/Article/3041221/department-of-the-navy-releases-climate-action-2030/.
[89] "US Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security," June 2019, https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/WPS_Strategy_10_October2019.pdf.

/ action plan (a few of which use a gender perspective), none have yet developed a climate adaptation / action plan for application in a defense or security context.

In addition to climate action plans that address the broader and longer-term strategies required to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts, given the large role the defense and security sector plays in disaster response, militaries must also have Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HA/DR) plans that focus on immediate disaster response and relief operations. Such plans provide a structured approach for mobilizing resources, deploying personnel, and collaborating with other agencies, which is crucial for timely and organized disaster response efforts. In other words, these plans ensure improved readiness, reduced response times, and the ability to save more lives, and reduce suffering. Yet as with climate action plans, the vast majority of the disaster management plans developed by the participating Project countries do not include a thoroughgoing gender perspective.

Image Credit: Council on Foreign Relations

The following provides a brief overview of plans which the participant countries have adopted:

- **Fiji's** National Adaptation Plan (2018) was developed in consultation with vulnerable groups (including women), references a gender- and human right-based approach, and uses those as criteria for prioritizing adaptation actions, though it does not include any direction regarding military engagement.
- **Indonesia's** National Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation (2019) includes a section on "Gender Responsiveness, Traditional and Local Knowledge," though this only lightly addresses the unique impacts of climate change on women, and the plan does not include any direction regarding military engagement.
- **Papua New Guinea's** National Adaptation Plan 2023 (2022-2030) references gender 52 times, speaks to a "gender-responsive approach," and gender responsiveness is clearly articulated in its framework. Gender is also included in the outputs. However, the NAP does not include any direction regarding military engagement.
- **Philippines'** National Climate Change Action Plan 2011-2028 mentions "gender equality and the full and equal participation of women" though leaves full development of this to the Gender And Development framework, though it does not include any direction regarding military engagement.
- **Thailand's** climate National Action Plan (2017) and the Thailand Strategy 2018 – 2037 NAP address climate but are not specific to the defense / security agencies.hough there was a participatory consultation process, the plans do not specifically mention gender .
- **Vanuatu's** National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2011) does not apply to military activities and does not include a gender perspective. Vanuatu does, however, have a well-developed National Determined Contribution which includes some adaptation measures with a strong gender perspective, but this policy does not provide direction to military disaster responses.
- **Vietnam's** National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (NAP) for the period 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050, does not robustly address gender. Its "Mainstreaming Gender into the National Adaptation Plan Process" (2023) does address gender, though it does not pertain specifically to defense and security sectors.

Fiji has an active HA/DR framework where the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) engage in disaster response operations. The RFMF collaborates with national agencies like the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) to provide relief and support during and after disasters. Their activities include search and rescue, medical aid, and logistical support. Notably, Fiji's National Humanitarian Policy, currently undergoing revision, aims to enhance disaster response coordination and community support, incorporating themes such as international deployments, the needs of women and children, and traditional knowledge.[90] [91]

Indonesia's military (the BNPB/BPBD Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI)) is significantly involved in HA/DR activities. It is frequently deployed in response to natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions. The military's role includes evacuation, search and rescue, distribution of relief supplies, and rebuilding infrastructure. Indonesia has a structured approach to integrating military efforts with civilian disaster management agencies. Yet evaluations of existing plans suggest gender has yet to be significantly incorporated.[92]

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[90] Rashika Kumar, "Fiji Humanitarian Policy Undergoes Revision to Enhance Disaster Response and Community Support," *Fiji Village*, April 9, 2024, https://www.fijivillage.com/news/Fiji-Humanitarian-Policy-undergoes-revision-to-enhance-disaster-response-and-community-support-8fx5r4/.
[91] Pita Ligaiula, "Pacific Ministers Endorse Fiji Military's Blackrock Camp as Disaster Relief Depot," September 19, 2022, https://pina.com.fj/2022/09/19/pacific-ministers-endorse-fiji-militarys-blackrock-camp-as-disaster-relief-depot/.
[92] Chani Goering, Dan Morath, and Erin Hughey, "Indonesia National Disaster Preparedness Baseline Assessment" (Pacific Disaster Center, n.d.).

Papua New Guinea has adopted the National Disaster Management Act in 1984; it has been amended and is currently under review. The Act establishes the National Disaster Committee (NDC) responsible for disaster policy and coordination. The NDC, operating under the Ministry of Defence, coordinates disaster response and risk management efforts, working alongside the Provincial Disaster Committees (PDCs), which aim to address local disaster management needs (though not all provinces have fully operational PDCs). There are no mentions of gender or women in the Act.[93]

The **Philippines** has a comprehensive HA/DR policy. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) plays a critical role in disaster response, often leading efforts in coordination with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC). The AFP is tasked with providing immediate response during emergencies, including search and rescue, medical assistance, and logistics support. The current National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC) contains provisions for gender-sensitive toilet and bathing facilities and protections against SGBV, but is devoid of further gender considerations.[94]

Thailand has significantly enhanced its disaster risk management (DRM) to protect its population and maintain economic stability, learning from past catastrophic events to improve preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. The National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan (NDPMP) of 2015, which covers 2015-2030, provides robust legislative and policy frameworks for DRM. Investment in resilience is emphasized in national strategies, while local level preparedness is strengthened through coordination mechanisms and capacity building. The focus on "Building Back Better" aims to enhance infrastructure resilience post-disaster, though challenges remain in funding and implementation at the grassroots level. The NDPMP does not substantively incorporate a gender perspective, only referring to women in terms of prioritization for evacuation.[95] [96]

Vanuatu has adopted the Disaster Risk Management Act No. 23 of 2019, which provides the regulatory framework for disaster management and aims to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation at all levels of governance. It includes provisions for disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and the establishment of necessary institutions and mandates, such as the National Disaster Committee, National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), and the National Emergency Operations Center. Vanuatu's disaster management strategy emphasizes a whole-of-society approach, including all stakeholders such as government employees, the private sector, NGOs, and communities. It makes a cursory mention of "gender responsiveness" but does not define or detail how that should be applied.

Vietnam has developed several policies and frameworks to address disaster risk reduction (DRR), including the National Strategy for Natural Disaster Prevention, Response, and Mitigation to 2020, as well as the Vietnam National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 (2021-2030). The 2020 Strategy focuses on enhancing the capacity of communities to respond to disasters, improving early warning systems, and integrating DRR into socio-economic development plans. It aims to reduce the loss of life and property from natural disasters. The 2021-2030 Action Plan aligns with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and aims to strengthen disaster resilience at all levels. These and other policies provide perhaps some of the most comprehensive disaster management plans in the region, but the English-language version of Natural Disaster Prevention, Response, and Mitigation to 2020 does not demonstrably include a gender lens.[97]

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[93] "Papua New Guinea: Disaster Management Act (1984)" (2018),
https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/papua-new-guinea-disaster-management-act-1984.
[94] Matt Williams, "National Disaster Response Plan (NDRP) Philippines" (NDRRMC, n.d.).
[95] "Disaster Risk Reduction in Thailand," Status Report 2020 (Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, 2020),
https://www.undrr.org/media/48642/download?startDownload=20240523.
[96] Animesh Kumar et al., "National Disaster Risk Management Plan (2015) Thailand," 2015,
https://www.disaster.go.th/upload/download/file_attach/584115d64fcee.pdf.
[97] "Vietnam: National Strategy for Natural Disaster Prevention, Response and Mitigation to 2020," 2020,
https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/vietnam-national-strategy-natural-disaster-prevention-response-and-mitigation-2020.

Both climate action plans and HA/DR plans are crucial: HA/DR plans ensure effective immediate response to crises, while climate action plans prepare for and mitigate the long-term impacts of climate change. Importantly, both HA/DR and climate action plans must be gender-responsive to address the unique needs and vulnerabilities of all affected genders, particularly women and girls. Integrating intersectional gender perspectives ensures that aid distribution is more equitable, that all voices are heard in decision-making processes, and that the specific health, safety, and welfare needs of diverse women are met. Integrating an intersectional gender perspective in climate action and HA/DR plans leads to more inclusive, effective, and sustainable disaster response and climate adaptation efforts, ultimately contributing to greater resilience and community well-being. This Project therefore responds to the dearth of gender-responsive climate response and disaster management plans across the Indo-Pacific region.

THE PHENOMENAL EXPERTISE, CAPABILITIES, AND LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S CSOS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
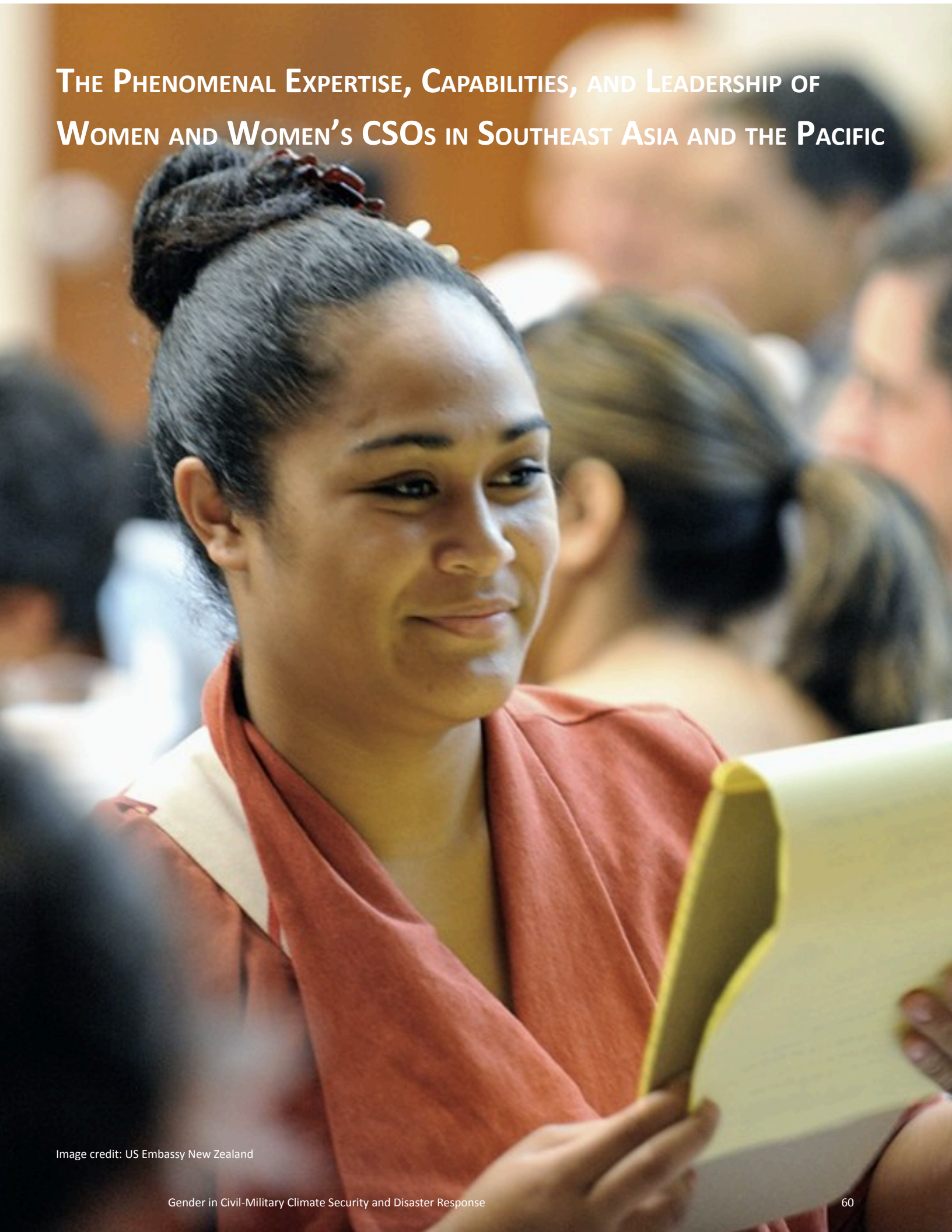
Image credit: US Embassy New Zealand

The work of women and women's CSOs in Southeast Asia and the Pacific focused on advancing gender equality is both exceptionally diverse and phenomenal. In particular, there is a significant group of CSOs committed to addressing gender inequalities *and* mitigating and adapting to climate change; preventing, preparing for, and managing health crises and disasters; adopting climate-smart agriculture practices; defending the environment from damage and destruction; promoting environmental sustainability; nurturing land and marine habitats; and advancing the clean energy transition. Importantly, this work is carried out under overarching global conditions of pervasive, gender-unequal regimes. Across the region, women are coordinating and strengthening resilience networks, helping others build alternative livelihoods, diversifying their business models for resilience, advocating for inclusivity and a voice at the table, facilitating community training, and improving the health resilience of their communities.[98] The incredible work of the CSOs and representatives who took part in the Project workshops is a testament to the diversity and power of women's expertise, capabilities and leadership, and the importance of their centrality in all responses to the climate crisis and disasters.

The Civil Society Organizations represented in the Gender in Climate and Health Security workshops were:

- ActionAid Vanuatu
- Advancing PNG Women Leaders Network
- Bayi Inc., Philippines
- Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population, Vietnam
- Center for Environment and Community Research, Vietnam
- Coral Triangle Center, Indonesia
- Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, Philippines
- Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding, Fiji

- Philippine Council for Health Research and Development
- Sulong Peace Inc., Philippines
- The Network of Civic Women for Peace (Civic Women), Thailand
- Transcend Oceania, Fiji
- Vanuatu Human Rights Coalition
- Vanuatu Young Women For Change
- Women Working Group (WWG), Indonesia
- Women's Network of Disaster in the Deep South of Thailand

Image Credit: Pacific Forum

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[98] UN WOMEN, *Accelerating Action for Gender Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2023, https://wrd.unwomen.org/explore/insights/accelerating-action-gender-responsive-disaster-risk-reduction.

Civ-Mil Partnerships in Disaster Response: Seizing Opportunities for Advancing Gender Equity

The preceding sections have highlighted the innate connections between human – community – society – national – international (in)security in the context of the climate crisis and intensifying disasters. As climate and ecological breakdown continues to compound and reinforce gendered insecurities around the world, there is a growing imperative to adopt a gender perspective, pursue intersectional gender equality within all policymaking, disaster planning and response, and promote the leadership, engagement, decision-making, and meaningful participation of diverse women and women's CSOs. Given the gender-blind nature of many national climate action and adaptation plans (including the few that have been developed for the defense and security sector) civil-military partnerships offer an important – and unique – vehicle for enhancing women's participation and leadership in climate and disaster planning and governance, and incorporating a gender perspective into states' climate disaster HA/DR strategies.

> **Women-Led CSOs Are Stronger Together**
>
> *Coalitions of women-led groups are common in WPS efforts. The Network of Civic Women for Peace is one of 23 women-led organizations in Thailand that collaborate to advocate and implement "safe public spaces" as part of peace dialogue processes.*
>
> ~Fatin Jamjuree, The Network of Civic Women for Peace, Thailand

Civil–military relations broadly refers to "the interaction between militaries and a wide range of civilian actors such as INGOs, governments, legal practitioners, security agencies, human rights advocates, and development actors, and can be practiced for a wide range of purposes."[99] As a United Nations system framework, Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) specifically refers to "the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency, and when appropriate, pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from coexistence to cooperation. Coordination is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training."[100]

Collaboration between civilian organizations (such as civil society organizations (CSOs)), governmental agencies, and local communities) and military forces offers opportunities to address complex challenges using a whole-of-society approach, which is especially important for humanitarian emergency response to natural disasters. At the fundamental level, civil-military (civ-mil) partnerships can leverage the unique strengths and resources of multiple sectors to enhance the effectiveness of disaster response efforts and promote sustainable solutions. Civilian organizations often provide expertise in areas such as

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[99] Alistair D. B. Cook and Sangeetha Yogendran, "Conceptualising Humanitarian Civil-Military Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific: (Re-)Ordering Cooperation," Australian Outlook (Australian Institute of International Affairs, February 17, 2020), https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/conceptualising-humanitarian-civil-military-partnerships-in-the-asia-pacific-re-ordering-cooperation/.

[100] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Humanitarian Civil Military Coordination," 2024, https://reliefweb.int/topic/humanitarian-civil-military-coordination.

The Challenges of Neutrality for Women Peacekeepers and Disaster Respondents

A positive moment during the pandemic was that the insurgency group said they would pause operations during that time, so it [sic] was less tension. But other times, if I work too closely with military then I could be a target too. But if I work too closely with locals, then I could be the target of officials as well. It is hard to be neutral but that is what we need to do.

~Phahisa Thuramngam,
The Women's Network of Disaster in the Deep South of Thailand

community engagement, humanitarian aid delivery, and long-term development, while military forces contribute logistical support, security, and specialized capabilities for rapid response and crisis management. Crucially, by integrating a gender perspective, civ-mil partnerships can enhance the effectiveness, inclusivity, and sustainability of their response efforts, ultimately contributing to more equitable outcomes for all affected populations. Incorporating a gender perspective into civ-mil partnerships involves recognizing and addressing the specific needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities of people of all genders in crisis-affected contexts. This incorporation can include ensuring the participation of women and marginalized gender groups in decision-making processes, mainstreaming gender considerations into program design and implementation, and addressing gender-based violence and discrimination. Significantly, civ-mil partnerships adopting gender-transformative approaches may help maximize the potential of bringing about gradual disruptions and structural changes in harmful gender norms as they manifest in and inform certain institutions and systems.

Limitations and Challenges for Civ-Mil Relations

Despite the significant benefits of civ-mil partnership engagements, they also present complex challenges rooted in historical contexts and contemporary dynamics. One pressing issue is the neutrality of civilian organizations and individuals in such collaborations. Maintaining impartiality is often crucial to upholding CSO integrity and ensuring they serve the broader public interest above all else, including political and geopolitical goals. Problematically, humanitarian actors (including militaries) often have access to affected populations but may be challenged to localize HA/DR strategies to address the needs of those actually affected by the crisis.[101] Therefore, to promote effective, non-harmful humanitarian response and disaster relief, sustained dialogue and interaction among civil-military actors are crucial.[102] Strained civ-mil relationships arising from past tensions or violence may present obstacles to collaboration and meaningful partnerships. This challenge is particularly elevated in states across the Indo-Pacific with a history of military intervention in governance. Additional obstacles to civ-mil

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[101] Cook & Yogendran, "Conceptualising Humanitarian Civil-Military"
[102] Cook & Yogendran, "Conceptualising Humanitarian Civil-Military"

cooperation include that civilian and military actors often "adopt different goals and principles, they compete over domains of responsibility, and they have incongruent ideas about the need for militarized approaches in emergencies and disasters."[103]

Drawing on a feminist perspective of peace and security, civ-mil partnerships might risk embedding hierarchical relationships of power, and result in the exploitation of the knowledge, time, labor, and/or wellbeing of women and women's CSOs. Indeed, it has been argued that "the militarization of crisis response is not in the interest of armed forces, nor in that of civilian crisis organizations or society at large."[104] Overcoming these challenges requires a delicate balance of transparency, accountability, and a commitment to upholding democratic principles and addressing diverse human security needs to begin bridging gaps between the military and civilian spheres.

Best Practices for Civ-Mil Cooperation

The following are insights and suggestions from Project participants regarding best practices for civ-mil cooperation aiming to advance gender equality:

- Foster an inclusive environment in which women, men, and non-binary people, as well as other vulnerable populations, can freely communicate their needs and concerns.
- Establish clear, gender-transformative standard operating procedures for communication channels, resource sharing, and coordination mechanisms to facilitate civ-mil information sharing and decision-making processes.
- Engage in gender-sensitive trust-building exercises, especially when (civ-mil) relations have historically been adversarial or violent, as well as particularly in contexts where CSOs are not legally recognized.
- Encourage requests between defense / security and CSOs to be gender-inclusive, specific, and time-bound, and conveyed to leadership (women and men).
- Respect each other's mandates, roles, and expertise, while acknowledging the need for advancement of gender equality and the importance of collaboration and complementarity.
- Conduct gender-inclusive joint training and exercises to enhance interoperability and mutual understanding of respective capabilities and limitations.
- Promote transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in partnership activities, engaging women and men within local communities and other stakeholder groups to ensure their meaningful participation and ownership of response efforts.
- Develop a free-flowing, multi-directional messaging system between government and defense / security agencies, CSOs, and communities, especially when communicating with people in very remote regions.
- Recognize the roles and efforts of all entities, including women and men in leadership, especially that of CSOs which may be overlooked in government press and reporting.
- Prioritize the protection and welfare of affected populations (especially from sexual- and gender-based violence or SGBV) to devise collaborative response efforts that are conducted in accordance with humanitarian principles as well as customary and international law.
- Defense / security agencies tend to move slowly but have resources; CSOs tend to move quickly but lack access to resources. Efforts should be made to tap into the strengths of each partner and ensure resources are distributed in a gender-equitable manner.
- Ensure sufficient financial resources are available to support long-term civ-mil engagement.

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[103] Myriame Bollen and Jori Pascal Kalkman, "Civil-Military Cooperation in Disaster and Emergency Response Practices, Challenges, and Opportunities," *Journal of Advanced Military Studies* 13, no. 1 (2022): 79–91.
[104] Bollen and Kalkman, "Civil-Military Cooperation in Disaster and Emergency Response Practices, Challenges, and Opportunities."

Opportunities through Feminist Approaches to Civ-Mil Partnerships

To actively advance human security, equality and peace, civ-mil relationships can seek to center *feminist principles** of care, inclusivity, equity, and justice, while aiming to transformatively address structural and intersectional oppression. In doing so, civ-mil relations could serve to reduce diverse human insecurities, support human rights in the face of the climate crisis, and enable collaborative yet equitable responses to disasters and other humanitarian crises. Empowering local communities, particularly women's and marginalized groups, to be equally heard and lead climate resilience and adaptation efforts can foster sustainable solutions that address the root causes of environmental degradation and conflict. Investing in grassroots initiatives and participatory decision-making processes supports more sustainable responses to the climate crisis that are inclusive and grounded in the needs of affected communities.

Drawing on feminist values, which seek to advance the wellbeing and security of *all*, this Project has endeavored to ultimately highlight how defense and security resources can be harnessed for climate crisis and disaster response in ways that:

- Promote the ability of communities to withstand severe and compounding consequences of climate breakdown through inclusive and collaborative approaches;
- Emphasize and promote the agency, leadership, and knowledge of women and women's CSOs;
- Inspire communities and leaders to build back better through deliberately adopting gender-transformative practices; and
- Transform harmful gender norms at multiple levels– internalized, interpersonal, collective, institutional and structural[105] – in aiming, above all, to forge more peaceful societies centering on human security, environmental sustainability and collective wellbeing.

Image credit: [illegible]

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[105] "The Five Layers of Gender Inequality," Instagram Post, January 24, 2023,
https://www.instagram.com/theequalityinstitute/p/CnyL9ElO4qv/?locale=ru.

Reframing (Climate) Security through a Feminist Lens

While multiple feminisms and feminist perspectives exist, broadly, a feminist perspective of disasters and the climate crisis offers a critical reframing of "security," differing substantially from and challenging non-gendered and "hard security" framings that continue to dominate public and international policy domains, including academia and think tanks. A feminist perspective centers human security, highlighting how the intensification of the anthropogenic climate crisis is exacerbating existing social inequalities and power imbalances that may result in societal breakdown and increased violence and conflict. Increased investments in arms and military capacity frequently occur as governments prioritize national security responses over human security, peace-building, and public services. This trend threatens to perpetuate cycles of conflict, disproportionately impacting marginalized communities (and often those in low-industrialized countries who have contributed the least to climate change), particularly women and gender-diverse individuals who often bear the brunt of armed conflicts, disasters and environmental degradation. Importantly, increased militarization will also undermine efforts to address the root causes of climate change – including the elevated carbon emissions of militaries globally – and exacerbate human and environmental injustices.

In aligning with feminist principles, civ-mil relations could become innately committed to the de-escalation of conflicts and crises, not only by addressing harmful patriarchal norms, behaviors and ideals, but also through supporting processes of demilitarization. Climate- and gender-just feminist initiatives require a redirection of funds from military budgets toward initiatives that prioritize the needs of communities, especially those most affected by the climate crisis and disasters. In turn, these funds can support sustainable development projects, decolonization efforts, non-violent conflict resolution, environmental conservation programs, and renewable energy initiatives that promote resilience and adaptation. Furthermore, adopting robust feminist foreign policy frameworks that prioritize – and adequately fund – gender equality, human rights, and environmental justice programs can guide and reshape national priorities towards peacebuilding, social justice and sustainable development.

Image Credit: Pacific Forum
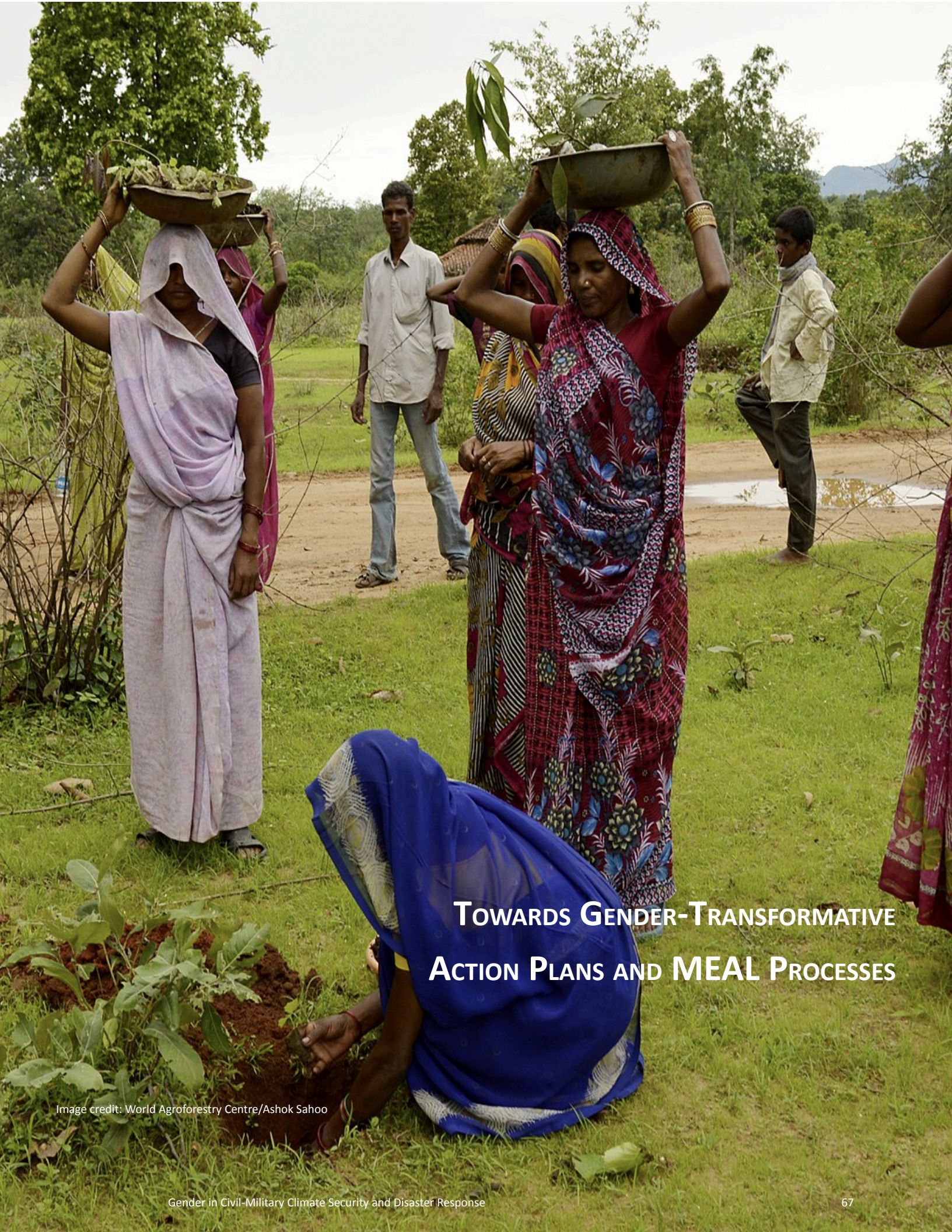
Image credit: World Agroforestry Centre/Ashok Sahoo

**TOWARDS GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE
ACTION PLANS AND MEAL PROCESSES**

ACTION PLANS

The process of developing Action Plans – such as for WPS programs – fundamentally involves engaging in multiple levels of strategizing. In the case of climate and / or disaster management action plans, international frameworks such as the Sendai Framework, the WPS Agenda and the SDGs may inform action plan development, as well as regional action plans, national action plans, organizational plans, and project-specific plans. In the case of action plans for gender-transformative disaster management and HA/DR, a gender perspective should be comprehensively integrated across all sections of the Plan, including development, operations, MEAL, and governance. Core elements that should be included in a gender-focused action plan encompass ways to address the problem and its root cause by defining governance structures, outlining strategies, determining outcomes and priorities, setting indicators and data collection methods, specifying the frequency of monitoring, identifying target populations and key settings, proposing essential actions, and appropriately allocating resources. Challenges in developing action plans include the need for meaningful participation and leadership of diverse groups, adequate resources and gender-responsive budgets, clear accountability mechanisms, and effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Despite these challenges, comprehensively integrating gender perspectives into action plans is crucial for promoting peace, security, and sustainable development.

> **Measurement and Evaluation are Crucial Components**
>
> *Despite many accomplishments made on WPS NAP implementation in the Philippines, we are looking to better link interventions with WPS NAP targets; ensure multilevel implementation both at local and national levels; and develop more robust NAP measurement, evaluation approaches, and budgeting.*
>
> ~Kristine Rosary E. Yuzon-Chaves, Executive Director and OIC Atty., Philippine Commission on Women

MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING (MEAL)

Action plans are often only as good as their government-supported, gender-responsive budgets, leadership buy-in, and sustainable outcomes. Knowing whether goals and outcomes have been achieved is only possible with thorough and ethical collection and utilization of data – a process that is often referred to as measurement, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL). By implementing a robust MEAL process, action plans are more likely to be tailored to meet the diverse needs and circumstances of persons of all genders, ultimately leading to more effective, inclusive – and hopefully transformative – disaster responses. Good practices in MEAL include disaggregating data by gender, age, and additional identity characteristics to pinpoint intersectional disparities and disadvantages. A gender-responsive approach to MEAL should involve using gender-sensitive indicators (tools for measuring quantitative or qualitative progress), seeking to understand structural power dynamics and access to resources, involving diverse stakeholders from the outset and throughout the MEAL process (particularly affected populations), and regularly collecting feedback from affected populations. Indicators should be chosen based on what factors need measurement in a given local and national context. When identifying indicators, it is important to ask not merely "what do 'people' need?" but to apply an intersectional lens to ask "*which* groups or *who* needs what?" Such an approach to developing a MEAL framework informs more gender-responsive decision making, and allows for adjustment of crisis strategies accordingly, thereby promoting accountability and enhancing the overall effectiveness of civ-mil disaster response efforts. Feminist approaches to MEAL represent an even

stronger commitment to transformative change. Feminist MEAL practices challenge gender equality organizations and programs to "think differently about what is considered evidence, (push) the boundaries of how evidence is captured, (question) who gives knowledge meaning and power, and (promote) social transformation".[106]

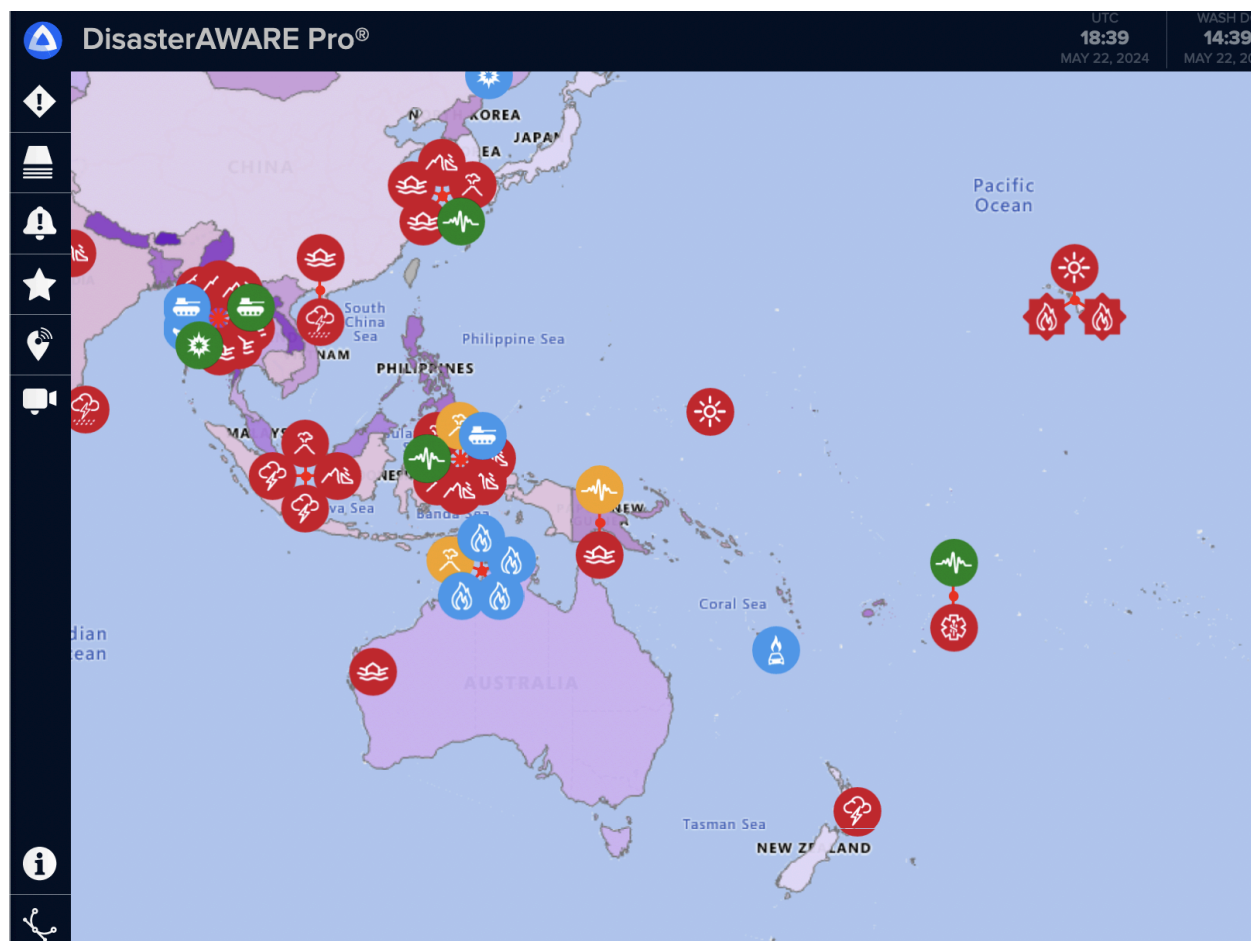## DisasterAWARE: Data-Driven Decisions in Disaster Planning

Figure 6: In discussing the development of action plans, participants explored the importance of data-driven decision making, and examined sources of data including the Pacific Disaster Center's (PDC) DisasterAWARE, which offers disaster-related information and includes a "WPS Regional Analysis'' filter. Participants explored the potential uses of such data, including aiding decision maker understanding of where additional efforts are needed to enhance gender empowerment (indicators include economic opportunity, government participation, health care, education), address gender inequality (indicators include information access, health outcome, personal security, sanitation), and recognize civilian exposure (indicators include conflict, maritime security, climate change) during disaster responses.

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[106] "Feminist Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning" (Oxfam Canada, n.d.),
https://www.oxfam.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Oxfam-Canada-Feminist-MEAL-Guidance-Note-English.pdf.

Advancing Gender-Transformative Civ-Mil Approaches to Climate Insecurity and Disaster Response

This Project was designed to promote interactions, networking, and inclusive and transformative engagements among gender, disaster and climate CSOs, national defense and security personnel, and civil service officers, to produce a consultative Gendered Risk Assessment and Action Plan Tool (GRAAPT). GRAAPT should be adaptable to any scenario based on local circumstances, and used to generate a place-based and context-specific strategy that meets the intersectional, gendered needs of all persons across the phases of disaster -- pre, during, and after.

Co-Creative Workshop Processes

Organizers of this Project based the collaborative and co-creative session formats on WPS and feminist principles, which prioritize the following:

Integrating Intersersectional Gender Perspectives & Promoting Gender Equity: Promoting social justice and gender equity by investigating, highlighting and addressing the differential, intersectional impacts of climate disasters and health crises on persons of all genders.

Consistency is Key to Engagement

Consistency from the government of engagement with civil society is essential. Years ago, the government barred civil society from being included, but now there is ongoing engagement, and that's what is needed.

~AdiVasu Levu,
Transcend Oceania, Fiji

Engaging all Stakeholders in Co-Creation Processes: Engaging diverse stakeholders, including diverse women (and, where appropriate, girls), women's CSOs, marginalized groups, and local communities, in disaster management planning processes to ensure their multiple voices are heard and needs are addressed. More broadly, this can be promoted through inclusive decision-making mechanisms such as community forums, participatory workshops, and consultation sessions. Furthermore, for the duration of the Project's workshops, interpreters were engaged to support equal inclusion and participation for those who requested to converse in languages other than English, while pre-translated materials were also provided to those same participants.

Aiming for Gender-Responsive and Gender-Transformative Outcomes: A gender-responsive approach looks to adapt interventions to better suit the needs of different genders, yet may not necessarily deeply challenge existing gender norms or power structures. A gender-transformative approach entails addressing the underlying causes of gender inequality and challenging traditional gender norms and power dynamics to foster lasting social change and gender equality. Critically, a transformative approach hopes to reshape societal structures and attitudes to promote equitable relationships between persons of all genders. While contextual and cultural sensitivity are crucial, gender-transformative approaches frequently hold the potential for, and bring about, more profound and sustainable shifts in gender relations and societal norms.

Male Allies: A recognition of the importance of supporting and promoting Male Allies for gender equality programming is steadily increasing. Concurrently, there is increasing recognition of the need for all actors – including CSOs, civil servants, and defense and security personnel – to better understand the concept(s), meanings and roles of masculinity/ies in reproducing – but also potentially challenging and reducing – gendered insecurities. As recognized in a report by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, "work needs not only to address how men and boys can be agents of change for gender equality and peace but also to engage with how narratives of masculine strength and superiority are used to justify gender inequality, violence against women, and participation in armed conflict."[107]

Male Allies A Key Component of Gender-Transformative Outcomes

Councilor Judy had the backing of Council President Sir Paul Kurai, one the most influential male community leaders… (which) gave her the prominence and also the recognition in her effort to call for peace during the biggest election fight in her ward. She was able to enlist the help of the military in maintaining peace in her ward and the district.

~Ruth Kissam, Board President, Advancing PNG Women Leaders Network (APNGWLN)

PRODUCING COUNTRY PRIORITIES AND GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION PLANS

For the purposes of this Project, participants worked to develop lists of risk assessment questions for the 12 gender-climate-security indicators (Early Warning, Healthcare, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Food Security, Recent Shocks, Employment and Poverty, Standard of Living, Life Expectancy, Education, Infrastructure, State Fragility, and Long-Term Adaptation) that could be used to analyze any scenario and determine who might be more or less vulnerable due to gender norms. For instance, rather than assuming that food and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) duties are equally divided in the household, the GRAAPT poses the question, "What is the baseline gender split in food procurement and/or WASH-related household duties?" "Will a climate crisis increase the time required to procure food or complete WASH-related tasks for women or men, girls or boys, or non-binary people?" Or, instead of assuming that women, men, and non-binary people have the same resources to draw upon to recover from a crisis, the tool asks, "Have women, men, or non-binary people used maladaptive responses (such as pulling children from school, or selling income-generating assets, or taking out an informal loan) to recover from the recent disaster?"

The tool also provides several ways to interrogate the impact of unpaid care and domestic work duties on those carrying them out (especially women), to help planners ascertain how climate crisis and disaster events may negatively impact an individual's socioeconomic standing, poverty, and health (physical, mental, economic, and so

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[107] Robert Nagel, Joshua Allen, and Kristine Baekgaard, "Beyond Engaging Men: Masculinities, (Non)Violence, and Peacebuilding" (GIWPS, 2023), https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Beyond_Engaging_Men.pdf.

on). Importantly, another set of questions examines how climate change may impair men's abilities to accomplish certain "milestones" of manhood (such as earning money, being able to afford marriage and children, purchasing a home). This inability to establish themselves as "men" may increase their vulnerability to being recruited into gangs, organized crime, or terrorist groups to make a living.

The workshop sessions enabled participants to interact and share their own unique domestic contextual expertise, perspectives, and suggestions for gender-transformative disaster response, while also drawing on lessons and experiences shared throughout the workshops by other country representatives. In turn, building on the discussions and insights forged during both the virtual and in-person workshop sessions, CSO representatives, civil servants, and defense / security personnel collaborated in country groups to co-construct a list of priorities to address in national GRAAPTs. Each country developed a list of 2-3 national priority indicators in which gender-transformative perspectives could ideally be applied in a disaster context, with a specific focus on opportunities through civ-mil cooperation. Priorities were chosen based on perceived domestic gaps and needs, combined with the criticality of addressing gender inequalities and insecurities in these areas. The following is a summary of the top 2-3 priorities for each country:

- **Fiji**: Infrastructure; WASH; and Socioeconomic Development / Standard of Living
- **Indonesia**: Education, Early Warning, Long-Term Adaptation
- **Papua New Guinea**: Education, Socioeconomic Development / Standard of Living
- **Philippines**: Healthcare, Food Security
- **Thailand**: Infrastructure, Education, WASH
- **Vietnam**: Life Expectancy; Early Warning

Directly informed by women CSOs, civil servants, and defense and security officers, the Gendered Risk Assessment and Action Plan Tool (GRAAPT) is therefore designed to be used by defense and security personnel at the local community level across the life cycle of disasters and climate events. The tool is particularly intended to guide the targeted relief of gendered human insecurities, to prevent unequal gender power imbalances from becoming further entrenched during an HA/DR response, and to create conditions for gender-transformative outcomes.

Follow this link to Appendix 3. Gendered Risk Assessment and Action Plan Tool (GRAAPT).

Image credit: Nordic Development Fund

FINAL REFLECTIONS

This Project has focused on the highly complex ways in which gender norms intersecting with other social inequalities influence who is vulnerable to a climate crisis event, how individuals react to and persist under the pressures of the global climate crisis, and the ways in which gender norms, community dynamics, and broader socio-political systems and institutions either entrench inequalities or redefine roles to transform gendered power structures. If the climate crisis is the context in which all HA/DR of the future will occur,[108] addressing diverse women's insecurities will be a powerful determining factor of societal security and wellbeing. The mounting costs to human security and federal budgets caused by climate-induced floods, wildfires, cyclones, heat waves, and droughts demand equitable solutions. Broadly, it is imperative that diverse groups of women meaningfully inform, participate in, and equally lead civil, defense and security sector responses to natural disasters and climate-related tensions, and that their expertise and real experiences underpin gender-transformative HA/DR approaches. Actors and institutions should seek to build relationships with women's CSOs in cities, towns, and villages ahead of a disaster so that lines of communication will be open and accessible during times of crisis.

The GRAAPT approach developed through the Project and explored in this Major Report has attempted to provide a way to comprehensively add a gender perspective to any climate security HA/DR strategy. It has done so by using a consultative, diagnostic approach to ascertaining the unique gender factors that impact disaster response outcomes. Undoubtedly, the feminist-informed approach to HA/DR planning adopted in this project, which focuses on grassroots consultations and uplifting women to advance gender equality requires time-consuming and labor-intensive processes. If gender is given due consideration using this method, it is likely to generate critical insights that guide more effective climate adaptation/action policies and programs, and serve to advance gender-transformative action and outcomes. As such, this diagnostic approach represents only the first step; it requires ongoing flexibility and adaptation to ensure contextual suitability, especially for expedient use following a catastrophic event. More research, testing and critical analyses are required to refine the process across multiple contexts and with additional civ-mil actors and partnerships.

Image Credit: Pacific Forum

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[108] Carol Cohn, "The Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the Climate Crisis: Inextricable Links" (Talk presented at The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden, March 9, 2020),
https://genderandsecurity.org/sites/default/files/Carol_Cohn_-_WPS_and_the_Climate_Crisis_-_Inextricable_Links_0.pdf.

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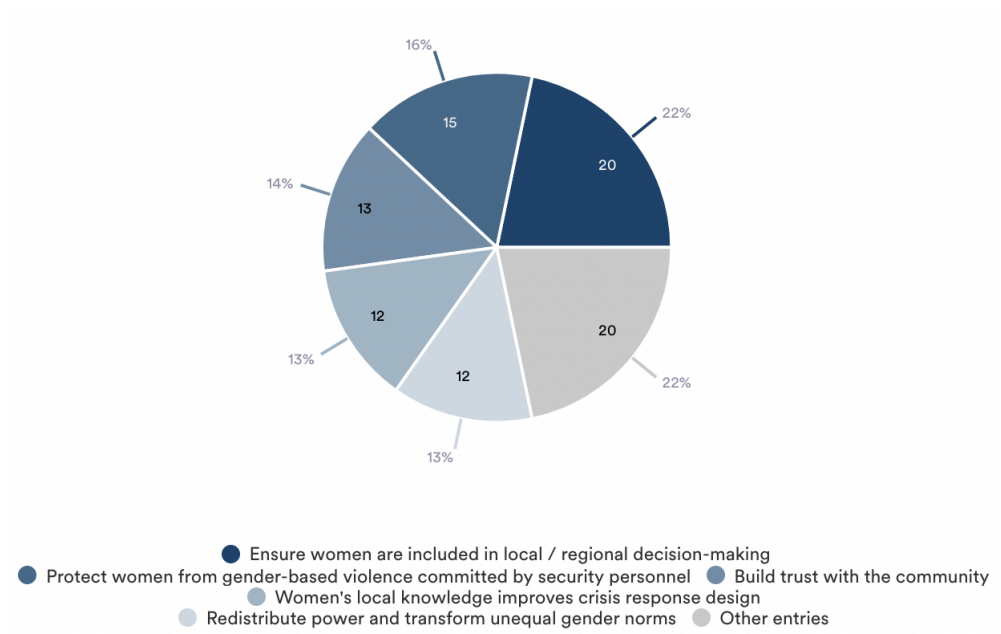
Figure 7: The pre- and post-event surveys found that the biggest benefits of including women and gender perspectives in crisis planning include women's increased participation at local, national, and regional decision-making levels; improved ability to protect women from SGBV committed by security personnel; and building trust between defense / security personnel and the community.
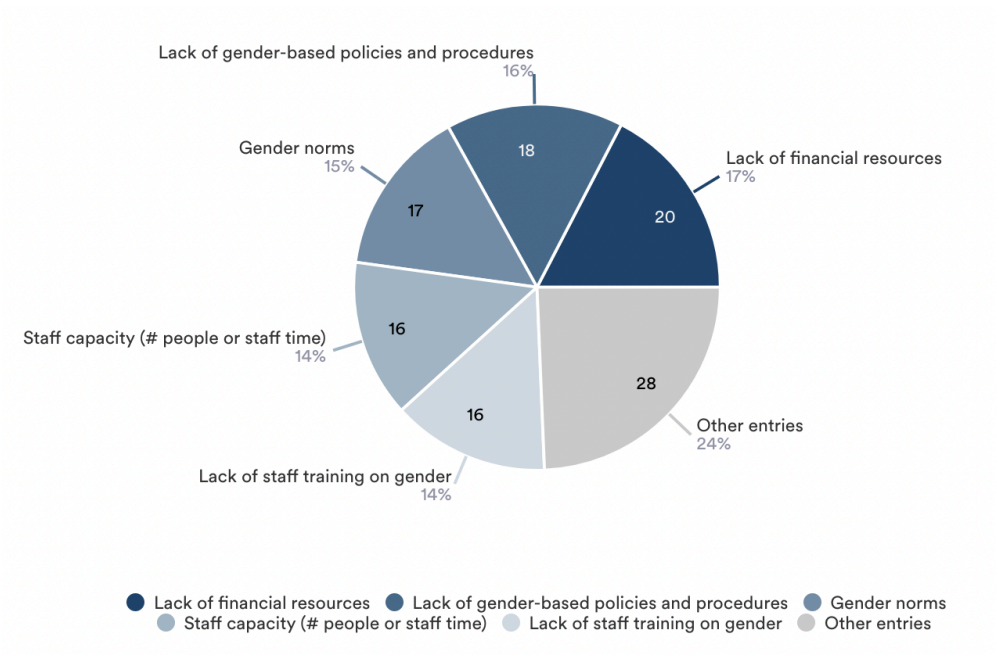

Figure 8: In pre- and post-event surveys on this subject, participants noted that lack of funding; lack of gender-based policies and procedures; limited staff capacity (# people or staff time available); and lack of training were the largest obstacles to integrating gender perspectives in climate and health crisis project planning.
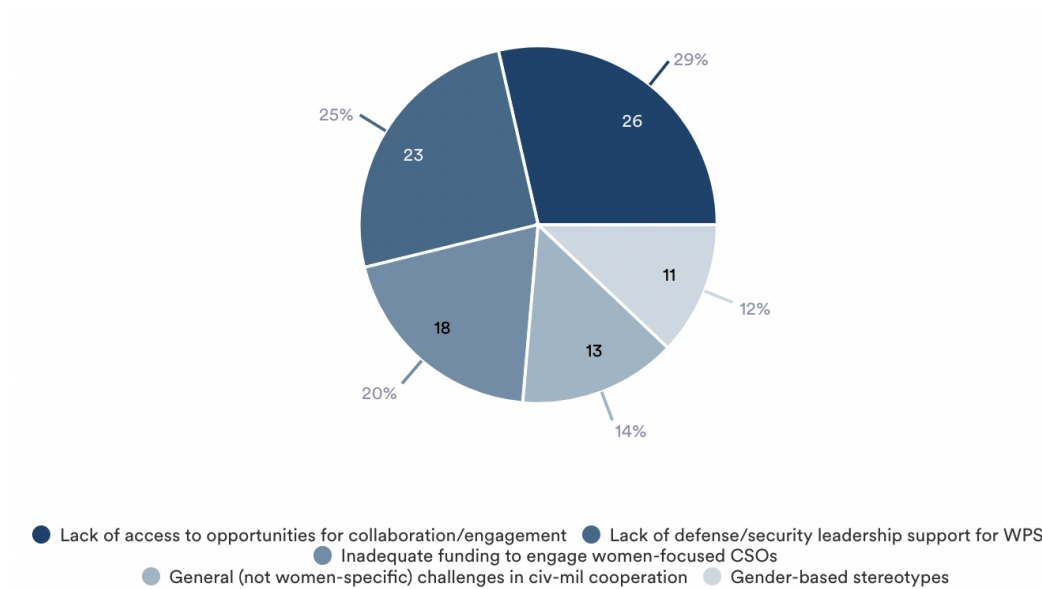
Figure 9: Participants felt the greatest challenges to collaboration between the defense / security sector and civil society on gender, health and climate disaster responses included a lack of opportunities to interact, a lack of defense / security leadership support for women's groups to participate, and a lack of funding.

LIMITATIONS AND LESSONS

The research team sought to ensure a collaborative approach to survey design with CSO representatives. However, demanding schedules and emotional, mental, and / or physical fatigue limited the extent to which the survey could be co-created with local CSO input. Additionally, cross-border banking challenges and language disparities resulted in a smaller survey sample size than initially desired. For the research team, this highlights the importance of ensuring a greater allocation of resources towards more extensive, less time-constrained consultations with women's groups as trusted community partners, and ensuring all participants' language and accessibility requirements are fully supported. Moreover, it re-emphasizes the criticality of adopting feminist principles in centering care, understanding and empathy to ensure women and women's CSOs are not over-burdened in contributing to gender equality and climate response efforts, whether in a private, community or work capacity.

Appendix 2. Equity in Discussion Guidelines

Pacific Forum Women, Peace and Security Program
Equity in Discussion Guidelines

As we engage in conversations with one another, we want to do so in ways that maintain a respectful tone and honor the diverse perspectives and participants within our group, especially those of marginalized groups. To that end, we have created a *suggested* set of discussion guidelines (see below). These guidelines are a central part of cultivating inclusive and equitable teaching and learning environments since they make intentional and transparent key principles of interactions and can be a place of reflection and accountability when tense situations arise.

Please review these discussion guidelines as a group and revisit them regularly if necessary.
They can be modified at any time. Maintaining them is a group responsibility.

Suggested Discussion Guidelines (can be modified by group)

1. **Listen actively**, without interrupting.
2. **Check for clarity**: If you're not sure what someone means, be sure to ask for clarification before responding.
3. **Speak from your own experience:** using "I" statements over "we" "they" or "you."
4. **Respect silence**: Don't force yourself to fill silence. Silence can be an indication of thought and process.
5. **Participate to the fullest of your ability**: Step up, step back: If you usually speak up often or you find yourself talking more than others, challenge yourself to lean in to listening and opening up space for others. If you don't usually talk as much in groups and do a lot of your thinking and processing in your own head, challenge yourself to add your voice to the conversation knowing that people want to hear your contributions.
6. **Challenge ideas, not individuals:** Don't be afraid to respectfully challenge, but emphasize ideas and refrain from personal attacks.
7. **Uphold agreed-upon level of confidentiality**.
8. **Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses.**
9. **Push yourself to be open to new ideas and experiences** even if they initially seem uncomfortable to you.

Appendix 3. Gendered Risk Assessment and Action Plan Tool (GRAAPT)