

ANNUAL GENDER AND DRM CONFERENCE

- **O&E: *Lessons learnt and agenda setting***
- **DRM: *Review of Gender Strategy and Strategy refresh***
- **PARTNERSHIP: *Repositioning and realignment***

DATE: 28 to 29 May 2024

Labadi Beach Hotel, Accra – Ghana

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, disasters have struck with more frequency and intensity in all regions of the African continent, leaving in its wake destruction of properties, loss of lives and livelihoods. Furthermore, evidence suggests that climatic disasters can exacerbate human pathogenic diseases resulting in an increased number of Outbreaks and Epidemics as changes in geographic distribution or ecological structure create new conditions for pathogens, giving them more opportunities to encounter susceptible hosts.¹ Such disasters have disproportionate gendered impacts on gender on women, girls, men and boys as well as on people living with disabilities. Mainstreaming gender in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policies and actions is therefore critical in strengthening the resilience of these vulnerable groups.

- *The ARC's Gender commitment*

An initiative of the African Union's Heads of State and Government, the African Risk Capacity (ARC), is a specialised agency of the African Union established to help African governments improve their capacities to better plan, prepare, and respond to extreme weather events, natural disasters and public health emergencies. ARC has, as part of its principles of engagement, adopted a differentiated approach to issues of gender equality in DRM. ARC is committed to closing the gender gap which is central to achieving aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 of an Africa whose development is people-driven relying on the potential of its people, especially its women and youth and caring for its children, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, thus recognizes that the important role of women in agriculture and in epidemic and disaster response is essential for food security and economic growth. It is in this perspective that ARC thus developed its Gender Strategy which was adopted in September 2019.

ARC's Gender Strategy has as its goal to transform Disaster Risk Management (DRM) approaches to ensure gender equality for vulnerable women and men in ARC Member States. The Gender strategy proposed a 5-year Plan of Action, outlining key actions to be carried out by ARC towards effective Gender mainstreaming in its Member States. The plan of action, with concrete indicators, was developed around the following 3 objectives of the Gender Strategy:

¹ Agosta, S. J., Janz, N., & Brooks, D. R. (2010). How specialists can be generalists: Resolving the "parasite paradox" and implications for emerging infectious disease. *Zoologia (Curitiba)*, 27, 151–162.
<https://doi.org/10.1590/S1984-46702010000200001>

- Institutionalise gender and DRM for innovative knowledge development and management
- Build institutional and individual capacities and tools for mainstreaming gender in DRM
- Engage in sustained policy dialogue and advocacy for a gender transformative DRM policy environment

- ***Gender in O&E***

Trends across the Global South show that disaster management and response, including management of disease outbreaks, is traditionally viewed as ‘men’s business’ – planned by men for men (World Bank 2011). As a result, women’s needs are often not understood or addressed. Africa’s inability to adequately respond to disease outbreaks is compounded by the continent’s existing gender inequalities which are often defined along roles and responsibilities assigned to men and women. These manifest as: discriminatory traditional and social norms, and power relations; disproportionate access to and control over resources, services, and technology; limited participation in decision-making and leadership by women; and unequal literacy and education levels. These inequalities amplify the impact of disease outbreaks on girls and women, and deepen existing vulnerabilities, affecting the provision of other healthcare services such as immunization of children and women.

Delayed responses to outbreaks often result in extended restrictions on the movement of people and goods using strategies such as lockdowns, quarantines, and school and market closures as measures of containment. Evidence shows that such measures have been associated with higher rates of what the UN has called the “shadow pandemic” – gender-based violence. An example is a report from Nigeria that showed that between March and April 2020, domestic violence cases rose by 149% for 23 out of 36 states following the introduction of a national lockdown induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to managing the spread of the disease outbreak, quicker response times will reduce gender-based violence.

ARC’s Gender integration work received an accelerated boost in November 2022 with the signing of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) investment grant agreement on "Gender Sensitive Mechanisms for Epidemic Preparedness". The objective of the investment agreement is to support the member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to provide rapid and appropriate responses to epidemics and outbreaks of diseases in the region, with the following fundamental objectives:

- Strengthen the capacity of ECOWAS Member States to better respond to outbreaks and epidemics.
- Promote gender-sensitive mechanisms for disease outbreaks and epidemic management.
- Provide technical support and outreach activities on the polio virus in West Africa; and
- Strengthen innovative partnerships in promoting Pan-African and Sub-regional collaboration.

Through this project, ARC has commissioned Gender, Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Specialists in each country to conduct an in-depth gender analysis of the health sector from the perspective of disease outbreaks and the interlinked disaster risk

management and financing sector in the six project countries (Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone). The Gender analyses were followed by the development of Gender Action Plans, Policy Briefs and Training of Trainers Manuals. The policy briefs have been used as working documents for the conduct of policy dialogues in the respective countries while the ToT manuals have been used to train Health Practitioners as well as DRM and CSO actors.

2. OBJECTIVES

As the Gender Strategy tenure ends this year, and as the Gender and O&E projects are completed in May 2024, it is important to take stock of our collective actions, share experiences, learn lessons and pave the way for important steps going forwards. The main objective of this Gender Conference is to take stock of Gender Mainstreaming in ARC from a holistic perspective. The following specific objectives will guide the Conference:

The specific objectives of the Gender Conference are:

- 1) To share experiences and outline lessons learnt in the integration of Gender in the O&E project.
- 2) To set an agenda for the next phase of the gender in O&E project
- 3) To critically examine the implementation of the ARC Gender Strategy Plan of Action 2019-2024
- 4) To explore critical actions and initiatives for consolidation of achievements of the Gender Strategy in the light of changing DRM landscape
- 5) To examine the Gender Partnership strategy and explore avenues of strengthening partnership in the light of changing DRM landscape.

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1) Knowledge developed in the Gender and O&E project is documented and shared.
- 2) A road map, with clear partnership framework for Gender in O&E is developed.
- 3) Achievements and gaps in the implementation of the GS are identified and analysed.
- 4) Potential actions/initiatives for a Gender Strategy refresh are identified and examined.
- 5) A comprehensive partnership structure is identified and discussed.

4. STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference will be organised in form of panel discussions around the following 3 major:

- Gender Mainstreaming in Outbreaks and Epidemics
- Gender Mainstreaming in Disaster Risk Management
- Partnership building on the ARC Gender mandate.

5. PARTICIPANTS

Conference participants will mostly be countries, institutions/organisations that have been actively involved in the implementation of the ARC Gender Strategy and the Gender in O&E project. In this perspective, the following categories of participants will be expected at the Conference as panellists:

- **Gender & O&E panels**
 - Gender Consultants
 - GCs or equivalents from the 6 project countries
 - Representatives from the Ministry of Health (1 per country)
 - Representatives of the Ministry of Gender (1 per country)

- **Gender Strategy Implementation:**
 - *Implementation in ESA and WCA*
 - Representative of the Ministry of Gender (1 per country)
 - Representative of the DRM sector (1 per country)

 - *Partnership Building*
 - Research Institutes and Think Tanks (chosen from active members of the Gender and Disaster Risk Management Platform (GDRMP))
 - Institutional partners (FAO, UN Women, IFC, UNITAR, InsuResilience)
 - Financial and Technical Partners (Global Affairs Canada, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, SDC, EU, WFP – Replica)

Therefore, a total of about 80 participants/panellists will be expected in the 2 days conference which will be held in a hybrid format. In addition, the following ARC departments are expected to be part of the Conference in their various capacities:

- The Gender Team
- The O&E team
- WCA and ESA teams
- PTS
- M&E
- Communications
- Consultant – Knowledge Management (GDRMP)
- Admin Support (HQ and Regional)

6. VENUE

Accra – Labadi Beach Hotel

7. DATES

28 & 29 May 2024

8. AGENDA

A draft agenda is provided below

DRAFT AGENDA FOR THE GENDER CONFERENCE – ACCRA 28 & 29 MAY 2024

Day One – Tuesday 28 May

Time	Session	Expected results	Suggested methods/Approach	Responsible
08:30 – 9:00	Arrival of participants			ARC
09:00 – 09:30	Opening Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting the scene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening Remarks by ARC GDG (Video) Goodwill messages from partners (Global Affairs Canada, B&MGF, EU, SDC etc) Welcome Speech – From the host country 	Facilitator
09:30 – 10:00 Family Photo and Coffee break GDRMP Video ARC Video				
10:00 – 11:30	Panel 1: The B&MGF Gender and O&E project - Experience Sharing and lessons learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Specific presentations: Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was the process of mainstreaming Gender What were the challenges? Share 3 best practices that are replicable in other countries 	Facilitator: O&E and Gender Teams
11:30 – 13:00	Panel 1 Cont The B&MGF Gender and O&E project - Experience Sharing and lessons learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country specific presentations: Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was the process of mainstreaming Gender What were the challenges? Share 3 best practices that are replicable in other countries 	Facilitator: O&E and Gender Team
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break			All
14:00 – 16:00	Group work	Exploring options for effective Implementation of phase 2 of O&E and gender project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the light of discussions in the morning session what innovative actions are desirable for consolidation of the gains in the Gender What relevant partnership should be explored 	Facilitator: O&E Lead (<i>brief overview of the phase 2</i>) M&E Lead
16:00 – 17:00	Plenary	Presentation of Group work	Summary of group discussions/ Key take aways	Facilitator: ARC O&E Lead ARC M&E lead
17:00	Close of day 1			

Day Two – Wednesday 29 May				
Time	Session	Expected results	Suggested methods/Approach	Responsible
08:30 – 9:00	Arrival of participants/Settling Down			ARC
09:00 – 09:45	Review of the Gender Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key note presentation of the ARC Gender Strategy and Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over view of the ARC Gender Strategy and Plan of Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process of implementation and key challenges Key Achievements 	Head of Gender Gender Analyst GDRMP consultant
09:45 – 10:00	Tea/Coffee break			All
10:00 – 11:30	Panel 2: ARC Gender Strategy Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the Gender strategy in the WCA and ESA regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining the Gender Journey in the regions What were the challenges? What are the opportunities? Share 3 best practices that are scalable. 	Facilitators: WCA & ESA Regional Heads
11:00 – 13:00	Panel 3 Partnership Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners' perspective of ARC Gender Mainstreaming efforts Identifying Funding pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perspective of achievements Proposing initiatives towards scaling up/consolidation Identifying potential partners In view of the potential innovative initiatives proposed in the previous sessions what are your views on potential funding pathways 	Facilitator: ARC PTS Lead
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break			All
14:00 – 16:00	Group work The Gender Strategy refresh	Exploring innovative initiatives and relevant partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the light of discussions in the morning session what viable initiatives can the ARC Group engage in in consolidating gains and exploring new horizons What relevant partnership should be explored? 	Facilitator: ARC Gender Team ARC M&E Lead
16:00 – 16:30	Closing Session	Wrap up/Presentation of Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key take aways and follow up actions 	Facilitator: ARC M&E Lead
16:30 – 17:00	Closing Formalities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing Remarks by ARC Closing Speech by Host Country 	Facilitator WCA
Coffee break and departure				All