

# Executive Summary

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Haiti is prone to natural disasters of many kinds: cyclones, tropical storms, landslides, floods and earthquakes. In less than twelve years, two terrible earthquakes have shaken the country, bringing enormous damage in human life and losses of all kinds. Just when the country had still not recovered from the aftermath of the first earthquake of magnitude 7.0 in 2010, on 14 August 2021, a second of magnitude 7.2 struck the south of the country where the majority of the affected municipal districts are remote and difficult of access. According to the Haiti Government, so far 2,248 deaths have been recorded 12,763 people injured and 329 missing.

This disaster has added to the raft of concerns faced by Haitian society at the height of a political crisis, following the death of the President of the Republic in July 2021 and in the midst of insecurity of all kinds including kidnapping. The country continues to be faced with COVID-19 which has led to 588 deaths out of a total of 21,124 cases, with the ongoing fear of the potential consequences of any variants. This disaster, which has severely hit all sectors of activity in national life, also came at the height of the hurricane season and on the eve of the return to school. It has created a humanitarian situation that the lessons drawn from previous crises may help to manage better.

It is against this particularly complex background that UN Women and CARE, in collaboration with the Ministry for the Status of Women and Women's Rights (MCFDF) and the Department of Civil Protection (DGPC) launched the Rapid Gender Analysis, designed to evaluate the impact of the earthquake of August 2021 on women, men, girls and boys, including persons in a situation of vulnerability, in order to guide the current humanitarian response in Haiti in the short term, as well as recovery efforts in the medium and long term. This study has been produced in partnership with the Special Gender Team of the humanitarian team in Haiti, and obtained financial, technical and logistical support from the following partners: Toya Foundation, IDEJEN, UNFPA, OCHA, PAHO/WHO, UNAIDS, WFP, UNDP and UNICEF.

This study allows us to restore and take into account the views of women, men and young people in the three affected departments in devising adapted responses in line with gender-specific needs, considering situations of vulnerability related to gender, disability, age, and other socioeconomic conditions. This study also echoes the appeals launched by women's organizations for a more gender-sensitive response, and one which takes their leadership into account.

## Key messages on the impact of the earthquake

Since the earthquake, the affected population finds itself in urgent need of shelter, drinking water, food, basic social services and protection, which is experienced in different ways by men and women of different ages and with diverse vulnerabilities.

## Roles and responsibilities

- In a humanitarian situation, the excess workload falls squarely on women, shared between searching for assistance, water, childcare. On the men's side, a notable change

has been the reorganization of authority in cases where their capacity to meet the needs of their family is disrupted.

- The majority of individuals in communities interviewed (47%) say that decisions in the household are currently taken jointly by the man and the woman, 36% say that the man alone decides and only 12.5% say that the woman decides alone.
- Some young people become heads of household following the death or incapacity of their parents and are forced to engage in small jobs which makes them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

## Livelihoods

- The earthquake is the source of loss of resources, jobs and capitalization of people in the informal sector, women in particular. 30% of women and 34% of men interviewed said that they had lost productive capital; 36% of members of the community in all estimate that they have lost assets.
- Women are become more and more dependent on their spouses who themselves have lost their productive resources, jobs and assets. The decline in unpaid activities is 26% among the women interviewed and 27% among the men, and almost half the members of the community (48%) said that idleness (48%) is the biggest change in their daily lives.
- Men and women small property holders deprived of their businesses and economic enterprises find themselves in debt without knowing how to pay the debts contracted with banks and micro-credit institutions.

## Health

- Members of communities underlined the lack of health workers and health facilities (34%), psychological trauma (32%), and diseases (16%) among the most significant changes experienced since the earthquake with regard to health.
- 68% of social service providers interviewed observed that women had only limited or no access to healthcare; 88% observed that access was even more limited for vulnerable groups.
- It is important to remember that despite the humanitarian emergency, primary healthcare, including reproductive health, family planning needs and postnatal care, remain equally crucial.
- Outside the family unit, young girls can become vulnerable or sexual prey and thus exposed to unwanted pregnancies.

## Water, sanitation and hygiene

- The lack of access to water affects women and girls more, because of the burden generally shouldered by them, and also their specific needs for water for menstrual hygiene. Furthermore, 83% of service providers interviewed found that girls did not have access to hygiene and dignity kits.

- In terms of the principal obstacles to access to water and sanitary facilities, men and women observed a disruption of infrastructure such as mains/pipes (19%) and risk of diseases (12%); more women noted the lack of tap water (27% against 21% for men).
- The lack of access to drinking water increases the risk of resurgence of waterborne diseases and the poor quality of the water affects the two sexes disproportionately, exposing women and girls to risks of vaginal infections.

## Protection

- The earthquake and the ensuing chaos overwhelmed the already precarious protection system, which led to an increase on risks of violence. The protection and supervision of children, especially girls, is now a priority to prevent exploitation and rape.
- In this context, 70% of the women and men interviewed indicated that their fear of sexual violence had increased since the earthquake.
- Men and women can all be victims of violence and insecurity, and women and girls are likely to suffer more, according to half the organizations consulted. Promiscuity in overcrowded camps, lack of separation of toilets between women and men, the lack of privacy and lack of lighting of sites increase the risk of violence for them.

## Food and nutrition

- The problem of access to food is mentioned by 60% of respondents, which makes pregnant women and young children more vulnerable to malnutrition in micronutrients, because of their increased need for nutrients, the small amounts of food that they consume, and the fact that deficiencies at this stage of life can cause limitations on development and lifelong disabilities, and make them more vulnerable to diseases and infections.
- For girls (33%) and boys (2%), the lack of food is one of the greatest concerns. According to the organizations, one of the deficits faced by the population is food (43%).
- Persons in a situation of vulnerability, such as children, older people, pregnant women and nursing mothers, persons living with chronic diseases and those with disabilities and certain marginalized groups (LGBTQI), are doubly affected because of their need for specific nutritional support and the socio-cultural barriers that they face, according to the interviews with men and women community members.

## Shelter

- In relation to displacement, 18% of women and 12% of the men interviewed are without shelter, while 53% of women and 56% of men sleep outside a damaged house.
- The problem of access to shelter is a major challenge, also according to more than 63% of the organizations interviewed and the majority of young people surveyed.
- Lack of shelter is generally indicated as a high risk associated with violence, including the need to live in the street, according to the service providers. Security was also underlined

by 28% of the people interviewed as a major and constant concern of their constituencies.

- The lack of shelter increases the sense of insecurity among both women and men (65% of women's organizations in Sud and 76% in Grand'Anse mentioned this problem of security among women).
- Both girls and boys said that accommodation was a crucial issue. The majority said that shelter was their main concern (55% of boys and 45% of girls).

## Key recommendations

The following key recommendations are offered to key actors for the short, medium and long term. Other action points specific to the sector are included in the recommendations section.

### In the short term

- Manage **data disaggregated by sex and by age** concerning the precise impact on women and girls and gender relations to measure better the differentiated conditions and target the priority needs of groups in the most vulnerable situations.
- Adopt a gender tool available in the public sector to **measure the effects of a disaster and facilitate gender-sensitive response modalities**, notably to ensure collection and analysis of information at local level.
- Ensure the **inclusion of the gender marker** in all humanitarian response projects to facilitate taking responsibility for and programming targeted on groups in a situation of vulnerability.
- Consolidate the mechanisms for consulting **civil society and significant channels of community engagement**, including permanent dialogue with the affected communities (women, groups led by young people, religious leaders, community activists and local administrators) to integrate priority needs and provide information on available resources.
- Create, in the framework of rapid response, the **security conditions to prevent risks of violence** and sexual abuse of women, girls, boys and the LGTBQ+ community.
- Strengthen women's capacity in terms of **responsible participation and leadership in an emergency situation** and **taking decisions concerning the response**.
- Provide **feedback and community responsibility mechanisms** to create spaces for collaboration around the design of programmes, transparency of operations and mechanisms for gender-sensitive complaints
- **Update and deepen this analysis of the changing gender dynamic within the affected communities** to ensure humanitarian assistance adapted to the specific and different needs of women, men, boys and girls.
- Ensure that **information gathering and distribution operations are planned and conducted in a participatory manner** in collaboration with men and women community leaders.

## In the medium and long term

- Develop **socioeconomic recovery programmes** which take account of the specific needs of women and vulnerable groups, considering the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.
- Establish integrated economic self-sufficiency programmes for women through women's and youth entrepreneurship, and equitable access to capital and agricultural credit at preferential interest rates.
- **Reduce current and future vulnerabilities** by giving women and girls the means of action, and supporting efforts and networks headed by women and strengthening disaster resilience and humanitarian action.
- **Train women** to prepare for and address disaster situations considering the recurrent crises in the country.
- Address the principal **structural problems related to insecurity and responsibility**, including by reinforcing legal protection against violence and sexual harassment through more robust structures which combat violence against women and girls.
- Work for **positive change in gender norms** and promote equality of women and men in decision-making spaces for response and recovery.
- Strengthen the **capacity and leadership of women's organizations** and the capacity of other actors to **respond to women's and girls' needs for protection**; develop programmes and laws to promote women's leadership.