

Report of online discussion

## **Violence against Women**

Organized by UNFPA

16 November – 11 December 2009

The discussion on "Violence against Women" was part of a series of United Nations online discussions dedicated to the fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000); and was coordinated by WomenWatch, an inter-agency project of the United Nations Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and an unique electronic gateway to web-based information on all United Nations entities' work and the outcomes of the United Nations' intergovernmental processes for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. For more information and other "Beijing at 15" online discussions, visit <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/beijing15/>

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*Disclaimer: The views expressed in this report reflect the opinions of participants to the online discussion and not the official views of the United Nations*

## Report on Online Discussion: November-December 2009

The UNFPA, along with other UN partners and WomenWatch, a project of the inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, organized an online symposium to discuss violence against women and girls to lead up to the 54<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women. This VAW symposium is a component of a system-wide series of online symposia, which was hosted at the [www.conversationsforabetterworld.com](http://www.conversationsforabetterworld.com) website (an online blog that focuses on population, gender and health).

Participants were asked to share experiences, knowledge and opinions on violence against women and girls. The objective of the online discussion was to increase awareness, encourage interest, and create a forum to share information on the following topics during a period of four weeks.

### Week One: Role of Men and Boys in Stopping/Preventing Domestic Violence

There were 12 posts and 33 comments in total on this topic. Participants wrote about the causes of domestic violence, exploring the cultural and social norms behind it, noting that VAW is sometimes even encouraged in some societies. They cite education as a solution – men and boys should be taught about the social, economic and political rights of women; women and girls should be taught to reject violence; professional service providers should be trained to identify and question at-risk victims. It was emphasized that men and boys should not only be engaged in dialogue, but should also support the fight against domestic violence. The broad theme was, therefore, public engagement, and participants demonstrated a deep conviction that the entire community should be take part in preventing and eliminating VAW.

### Week Two: Trafficking of Women – Prevention and Protection

There were 3 posts and 3 comments on this issue. One participant wrote about the need to address the demand for trafficked persons, through both legal means as well as education; there should be a comprehensive approach to seek out networks that facilitate trafficking. According to another, the State should be responsible for rescued women and rehabilitate them.

### Week Three: Rape as a Weapon of War; Are there useful interventions?

This topic had 1 post and 4 comments. The post was about rape as a war crime in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and all comments centered around the need to address the issue, but with no specific ideas on how to achieve this.

### Week Four: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: How is culture related to the prevalence of FMG/C?

There were 2 posts and 14 comments. Participants expressed their belief that culture, and more importantly, religion, was the reason that FGM/C had not been eradicated.

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There were also 7 other posts and 13 comments on general posts on topics such as globalization and VAW, and VAW in Brazil, Morocco and Mexico. 34% of the participants were male and 66% female, ranging from journalists and artists to leaders in the NGO sector.

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