

Commission on the Status of Women
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**Panel on “Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting
the situation of women or equality between women and men”**

Theme:
**Elimination of all forms of violence against women: Follow-up to the Secretary-
General’s in-depth study at national and international levels**

Written statement*

submitted by

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Role of the United Nations system in supporting national actions for elimination of all forms of violence against women:

Example of the Task Force on Violence against Women

Background

In recent years, the international community has steadily built a solid momentum across the globe to address violence against women as a grave violation of women's rights. Consequently, the General Assembly has addressed various aspects of violence against women, requesting separate reports and voting many resolutions. These include traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls (resolution 56/128); domestic violence against women (resolution 58/147); crimes against women committed in the name of honour (resolution 59/165); trafficking in women and girls (resolution 59/166); elimination of all forms of violence against women (resolution 59/167); and violence against women migrant workers (resolution 60/139).

To implement comprehensive and mutually reinforcing responses to violence against women, in its resolution 58/185, the General Assembly requested the UN Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth study on all forms of violence against women. The General Assembly also called for the study to include action-oriented recommendations for consideration by States including effective prevention and protection measures for women and rehabilitation actions for victims as well.

The Secretary-General's in-depth study reflected the inputs and contributions of many actors. A total of 129 Member States included information on violence against women in their responses to the 10-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Some 49 Member States provided additional information. The 150 reports submitted by States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women between January 2000 and December 2005 also provided valuable information on their efforts to prevent and address violence against women.

The report proposes recommendations for six key areas for action at the national level:

- Significantly improving gender equality and protecting women's human rights;
- Exercising leadership to end violence against women;
- Closing the gaps between international standards and national laws, policies and practices;
- Strengthening the knowledge base on all forms of violence against women to inform policy and strategy development;
- Building and sustaining strong multi-sectoral strategies, coordinated nationally and locally;
- Allocating adequate resources and funding.

The report of the UN Secretary-General and the General Assembly resolution urge United Nations entities to enhance coordination and intensify their efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, in a more systematic, comprehensive and sustained way. The resolution specifically calls upon the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality to follow up on the implementation of recommendations of the study. Indeed, the Network which counts approximately 60 members representing some 25

entities of the United Nations system, i.e. offices and departments of the United Nations Secretariat, regional commissions, funds and programmes, specialized agencies, and the World Bank holds excellent potential as it has played a central role in promoting gender equality throughout the United Nations system, especially in follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (Beijing +5) in 2000. The Network also monitors and coordinates the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the normative and operational work of the UN system.

Consultations within UN entities identified the following areas of interventions for the UN system:

- Implementation of policy frameworks that guide United Nations system efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women;
- Data collection and research on violence against women;
- Awareness raising, communication, and dissemination of good practices;
- Coordinated responses at the national level;
- Resource mobilization; and
- Coordination at the international level.

Objectives of the Task Force on violence against women

At its fifth session in February 2006, the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality established a task force on violence against women to enhance the response by the United Nations system to this scourge. Its membership currently comprises of UNDAW, UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNDP, UNICEF, OCHA, Regional Commissions (represented by the RCNYO), UN Habitat, ILO, WHO, World Bank, and IOM. UNFPA and the UNDAW serve as co-convenors of the task force. We believe that this task force will be instrumental in strengthening our collective and coordinated response to the challenge of violence against women, especially in support of action at the national level.

The Task Force has set itself the following four main objectives:

1. Enhanced, coordinated and systematic support to States, at the national level, in their efforts to eliminate violence against women through supporting comprehensive national approaches, for example support for preparation/ implementation of national action plans
2. Systematic and timely information exchange among entities of the United Nations system about existing and planned strategies, programmes and activities on violence against women, at global, regional and national level
3. Enhanced understanding of resources available from the United Nations system, at the national level, to support work by Governments and non-governmental organizations to prevent and respond to violence against women
4. Demonstrated leadership by senior officials of entities of the United Nations system to address violence against women.

The task force acknowledges that many entities have, and continue to undertake work in this area. We also emphasize UN entities' comparative advantages in addressing particular aspects, or forms of violence against women, for example, the ongoing "Inter-Agency Joint Initiative to Address Sexual Violence in Conflict and Recovery Situations." The task force will maintain information exchange with this Initiative and with other ongoing work so as to ensure coherence and avoid any duplication of efforts. The task force also supports and will advocate for expansion of the UN Trust Fund as a valuable mechanism to support national initiatives to end violence against women on the ground. It is important to note that the overall objective of the Task Force is to support national efforts, particularly national action plans, to end violence against women, while also undertaking advocacy and fund raising activities at the global level.

Results/outputs/outcomes expected by the Task Force

Within the two-year time frame of 2007/08, the task force aims to complete a number of specific outputs, and will implement a series of related activities. These outputs include:

- Inventory of United Nations system activities/resources and sharing of good practices, existing technical tools within UN entities and with national partners
- Resource flow analysis: the Task Force will develop a methodology for undertaking a resource flow analysis for work on violence against women within UN entities
- Review of effectiveness of the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (as mandated by the General Assembly resolution) as a system-wide funding mechanism for preventing and redressing all forms of violence against women and girls at the field level: current mandate and terms of reference of the Trust Fund, available resources, opportunities for increasing those resources, impact evaluation of past support provided through the Trust Fund, the role of UN entities
- Joint programming on violence against women in place in pilot countries, bringing together UN entities, the Government and NGOs in a common effort at the national level
- Technical assistance and resources mobilization to support development and implementation of national plans to end violence against women.

Organization of work of the Task Force

Members of the task force will dedicate resources to the implementation of agreed activities. In addition, dedicated staff resources will be sought to ensure ongoing support to the Task Force in the implementation of its activities. All members of the task force will take responsibility for completing specific agreed outputs. Sub-groups may be established as necessary. The Task Force will prepare an annual report to the IANWGE. Members of the Task Force and of the IANWGE in general will seek opportunities to

brief intergovernmental bodies (including Commission on the Status of Women, executive bodies of entities, and General Assembly) in statements by senior officials, etc.

Challenges

The New York-based task force aims at supporting initiatives at the field level. Its interaction with UN country teams will be critical. In this respect, the Task Force will use appropriate mechanisms such as UNDG to interact with UN country teams. Important additional financial resources will be needed to increase programming at the field level; the Task Force will engage with development partners to raise funds for programming within UN country teams. The Task Force is not a substitute to UN entities to individually implement the recommendations of the General Assembly on violence against women, therefore, it will advocate for more accountability within UN entities on violence against women programming and funding.