

PREVENTING AND ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN STAKEHOLDERS' FORUM

13 – 14 December 2012

United Nations Headquarters | North Lawn Building, Conference Room 2

The event is open to holders of a valid UN ground pass

INTRODUCTION, OBJECTIVES AND FORMAT

Violence against women persists in every country in the world as a pervasive violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. Such violence harms women, their families and communities, has significant economic costs and restricts and undermines economic growth and development. The international community has made considerable progress in creating the global framework for preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. In response, countries around the world are taking legislative and policy measures, improving services and protection for victims, and raising awareness to change behaviour and attitudes to make such violence unacceptable.

The fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in March 2013, will focus on the priority theme of the "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls". In inter-active panels, the Commission will focus on experiences, lessons learned and good practices. It will assess achievements and identify gaps and challenges. It will discuss ways and means to accelerate implementation of existing commitments on ending violence against women. The Commission will adopt agreed conclusions that are expected to identify gaps and challenges in the implementation of existing commitments and address action-oriented recommendations to States, relevant intergovernmental bodies, mechanisms and entities of the United Nations system and other stakeholders, in order to accelerate implementation. The Commission's attention to this priority theme is expected to add political momentum and commitment for concrete follow-up and action based on the outcome of the session.

Stakeholders at different levels are already preparing for CSW57, and momentum is building towards an inter-active and results-oriented session. At national and regional levels, governments, civil society organizations, parliamentarians, entities of the UN system and other actors are convening to set priorities and renew political commitment for action. At global level, efforts are under way to build alliances, strengthen networks and expand multi-stakeholder approaches to help accelerate the implementation of the existing normative framework and to deepen and strengthen it for greater effectiveness and impact.

UN Women is convening a forum to engage a range of stakeholders in the preparations for CSW57. The stakeholders' forum will:

- Raise awareness of existing commitments and standards for ending violence against women
- Create a platform for sharing ideas and strategies that work and bring results
- Identify key areas and issues where consensus needs strengthening
- Foster dialogue and build alliances to accelerate implementation and follow-up to the outcomes of CSW57.

The stakeholders' forum will consist of five inter-active panel discussions where participants from different institutional backgrounds and a range of experiences will engage in dialogue, highlight key areas for future work and commit to further action. A closing session will highlight key findings and commitments, and the way forward towards CSW57.

Panelists are invited to address key questions highlighted in the discussion guides for the panels. Each panelist is also encouraged to present one concrete result/outcome for CSW57 and her/his contribution/commitment towards achieving that outcome.

In advance of the stakeholders' forum, there will be an opportunity to submit online questions to be addressed by panelists and discussants.

OUTCOME

A report on the Forum, summarizing the key elements from the discussions and outcome expectations will be prepared and published on the web, and contribute to the preparations for the session. It will also help galvanize stakeholders towards effective implementation of the outcomes of CSW57.

SURVIVORS' FORUM

A survivors' forum, in the form of a panel discussion, with women who are survivors of violence will highlight how they have used their experience to influence policy development and legislative reform and implementation on ending violence against women in their countries or communities.

DISCUSSION NOTE FOR PANEL 1

SETTING THE STAGE: EXISTING GLOBAL COMMITMENTS FOR PREVENTION AND ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

CURRENT SITUATION

Violence against women persists in every country in the world as a pervasive violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality. It affects women and girls in all parts of the world, irrespective of factors such as age, class, or economic background. It harms families and communities, has significant economic and social costs, and restricts and undermines economic growth and development.

Significant work has been undertaken by States, entities of the United Nations system, NGOs, women's groups and networks and researchers to address all forms of violence against women. Over the past two decades, in particular, major advances have been achieved in elaborating and agreeing on international standards and norms to address violence against women. These form a baseline of commitment by States and other stakeholders to work to end violence against women. Yet progress in the development of international legal norms, standards and policies has not been accompanied by comparable progress in their implementation at the national level, which remains insufficient and inconsistent in all parts of the world.

PROPOSED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What are the key achievements and commitments of the international community for action to address all forms of violence against women?
- What are the major gaps in the global normative and policy framework for addressing violence against women? What are the major challenges, and opportunities, for closing these gaps, and how can those be seized successfully?
- What are the expectations for CSW57 in advancing the global commitments and common agenda for addressing violence against women and girls?

DISCUSSION NOTE FOR PANEL 2

ENSURING LEADERSHIP, COORDINATION AND MEETING THE RESOURCE CHALLENGE FOR ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

CURRENT SITUATION

Leadership to end all violence against women is critical at all levels (local, national, regional and international) and by all sectors (including State actors, opinion makers, business leaders, civil society organizations and community leaders). Such leadership is key to demonstrate political will, change attitudes and social norms, and ensure public accountability for ending the scourge of violence against women. The nature of violence against women requires that work to end violence against women goes beyond ad hoc, single-sector or single-issue responses to a comprehensive, systematic and sustained approach involving a broad range of actors. Coordination among such different sectors and levels is critical in assisting women who survive violence to access effective legal, health and social services, as well as enhancing prevention work. Violence

against women impoverishes individuals, families, communities and countries. The social, political and economic costs of allowing it to continue unabated are great and call for a commensurate investment in women's security. Such an effort requires a much greater commitment of financial and human resources.

There are increasing numbers of good practice examples for each of these dimensions, but more work is needed to ensure that they receive equal attention and that they mutually reinforce each other.

PROPOSED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How has leadership, at any level, made a difference in addressing violence against women? How has such leadership been raised to the highest level of Government, and how has it strengthened public accountability for all acts of violence against women?
- What coordination models exist at national level that successfully bring together all stakeholders towards a common purpose? What are the enabling factors in successful coordination models, how have those been institutionalized, and how could such good practices be replicated in different settings?
- What are adequate resources for tackling violence against women? What are successful strategies for ensuring that dedicated resources are available for work to end violence against women, both for prevention and for multi-sectoral responses, in a sustainable manner? How have such gains been made, and how could those be replicated?

DISCUSSION NOTE FOR PANEL 3

TACKLING CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: WHAT WORKS

CURRENT SITUATION

Violence against women and girls is a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. It is a complex phenomenon that requires holistic approaches that address its root causes and risk factors at all levels. These root causes lie in historically unequal power relations between men and women and pervasive discrimination against women in both the public and private spheres. Other factors, including social and economic status, individual histories of exposure to violence, and individual types of behaviour can be risk factors for certain forms of violence. The risk of violence can be exacerbated when it intersects with other factors: for example, women living with HIV/AIDS can be targets of further violence, stigma and discrimination, while the violence against women itself is one of the drivers of HIV/AIDS.

Among the key priorities for addressing violence against women and girls is the elimination of discriminatory sociocultural attitudes that reinforce women's subordinate place in society, and of attitudes and beliefs that condone or tolerate violence against women and girls in both the private and public spheres, at home, in workplaces and educational institutions.

A range of strategies have been adopted to tackle root causes and risk factors, including working with young people in formal and informal educational settings to address gender stereotypes and promote respectful relationships and raise awareness. Legislative and policy frameworks have been put in place to ensure the economic, social and political empowerment of women and the protection of their human rights. Efforts have also been made to change cultures,

practices, social norms and attitudes that condone or tolerate violence against women and girls in all settings, including through leadership, community mobilization and awareness raising. Given the clear association between HIV/AIDS and violence against women and girls, prevention strategies increasingly link the two issues.

PROPOSED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What types of legal and policy frameworks for the promotion of gender equality have addressed the root causes and directly contributed to the reduction and prevention of violence against women and girls?
- What promising practices exist for changing discriminatory social norms and attitudes and for transforming workplaces, educational institutions and public spaces into violence-free zones that can be scaled up and replicated?
- How have men, including male leaders, successfully contributed to changing stereotypes and behaviours that condoned violence against women? What lessons can be learned from such change, and how can such leadership be expanded and replicated?
- What types of programmes and policies successfully integrated the prevention of HIV/AIDS and of violence against women and girls? What are key factors that determined success?

DISCUSSION NOTE FOR PANEL 4

ENSURING INCLUSIVE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO ELIMINATE VIOLENCE AGAINST ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS (E.G. WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES, INDIGENOUS WOMEN, MIGRANT WOMEN, ADOLESCENT GIRLS): WHAT WORKS

CURRENT SITUATION

There is general agreement that the current responses to violence against women and girls and any accompanying prevention strategies are not sufficiently inclusive of women and girls who suffer multiple forms of discrimination. It is well documented that the availability of and access to such initiatives remains problematic. It is also well established whilst gender inequality and discrimination increases the risk of violence, intersecting or compounding forms of discrimination can increase women's risk of exposure to violence and exploitation further. Most recently, there has been increasing advocacy by the UN system and civil society groups to tackle violence against women with disabilities, against indigenous women, to name two examples. The newly declared International Day of the Girl Child also demonstrates the increasing gaps in the protection of adolescent girls from violence. Work by Governments, UN entities and others has highlighted the challenges faced by women with HIV/AIDS and links to violence.

PROPOSED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- It is well established that gender inequality and discrimination are risk factors for violence against women and girls but it has been argued that consideration of these factors alone has led to a one-size fits all approach to responding to and preventing violence against women. How can gender inequality and discrimination be better addressed in policies and programmes to protect all women from violence?

- How can prevention strategies meet the needs of those women who are marginalized from mainstream approaches?
- What are adequate resources for tackling violence against women? What are successful strategies for ensuring that dedicated resources are available for work to end violence against women, both for prevention and for multi-sectoral responses, in a sustainable manner? How have such gains been made, and how could those be replicated?
- How can governments ensure that the individual circumstances which diverse groups of women face every day are taken into consideration without having to duplicate response services and prevention strategies for particular groups?
- What are some of the challenges for Governments in trying to meet to ensure inclusive strategies and approaches? What expertise and good practice models can governments draw on to meet these challenges?

DISCUSSION NOTE FOR PANEL 5

INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY AND MULTISECTORAL RESPONSES: GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

CURRENT SITUATION

It is well established that the responses to violence against women and girls must be multisectoral and must seek to protect women from the violence they are currently facing but also stop the violence from reoccurring. The most effective multisectoral responses are those that are well integrated and coordinated (regardless of whether or not all services are provided in the one location, e.g. 'one stop shops') through the establishment of, inter alia, minimum service delivery standards, inter-agency service delivery protocols including referral mechanisms, common risk assessment processes, information sharing guidelines and case-conferencing guidelines for service providers to respond to those who are at the greatest risk. The evidence emerging is that implementation of multisectoral services and responses is uneven and inconsistent in many countries (both high and low income countries). This means that large groups of the population, particularly those outside the urban areas, do not have access to such services. Also, service systems are often not well integrated or coordinated to ensure the most effective responses to women and girls facing violence.

PROPOSED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How can Governments ensure that multisectoral services are more integrated or coordinated? Does the development of service standards assist in creating more integrated and effective service responses?
- How can Governments ensure that professionals working as part of a well-coordinated and integrated service delivery system have the capacity to respond appropriately to the needs of victims/survivors?
- What can States do to ensure greater geographic distribution of integrated and coordinated services; that services are available to a larger number of the population? What are some examples of good practice that can be replicated?
- What are the challenges facing States in ensuring greater availability of well-coordinated multisectoral responses? How can some of these challenges be overcome?