



Division for the Advancement of Women



Violence against women

WORKSHOP REPORT

Workshop for entities of the United Nations system

**Organized by
United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women
Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

**United Nations Headquarters
New York, New York
5-7 December 2005**

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I. BACKGROUND

In December 2003, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution (A/RES/58/185) requesting the Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth study on all forms and manifestations of violence against women. The Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (the “Division”) is responsible for the preparation of this study which will be presented to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session in the fall of 2006.

The General Assembly requested that the study be prepared in close collaboration with all relevant United Nations bodies. Throughout the process, entities of the United Nations system have been actively involved: some 25 entities participate in the task force established by the Division for the Advancement of Women, and several entities joined the Division in convening two expert group meetings earlier this year. United Nations entities have also provided feedback and comments, as well as studies, research and other findings as inputs for the study.

Preparation of the study is an opportunity to explore how the entities of the United Nations system can strengthen their response to violence against women as a human rights violation and an obstacle to the achievement of gender equality and other goals in the areas of peace and development, and to ensure systematic attention by all entities to the many different forms and manifestations of violence against women from a policy and operational perspective. It is also an opportunity to prepare the groundwork for effective follow-up, by the United Nations system, to the recommendations that will emanate from the Secretary-General’s study on violence against women.

The Division convened a workshop for entities of the United Nations system, from 5 to 7 December 2005, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The workshop aimed to assess the current status of United Nations system work on violence against women and to identify gaps and inconsistencies in the policy and operational response of the United Nations system to violence against women and areas of potential overlap. It also intended to address the question of resources that are currently available for activities to combat violence against women.

The workshop sought to reach agreement on a more comprehensive and well-coordinated system-wide response to violence against women, including mechanisms for enhanced collaboration and coordination. To that end, it sought to reach agreement on:

- a. areas requiring more attention, and steps to provide the required attention;
- b. opportunities for enhancing synergies in the work on violence against women across the United Nations system;
- c. measures to enhance the resource base for work on violence against women;
and
- d. mechanisms for better collaboration, coordination and information exchange.

The meeting was chaired by Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and Chairperson of the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE). The concept note and programme of work is attached as annex I, and the list of participants is attached as annex II to this report.

II. SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The workshop was comprised of presentations in plenary followed by comments and discussion. Points of agreement and concrete recommendations were prepared in a working group. Presentations and discussions focused on content issues, where entities' policy and normative frameworks, as well as operational activities were highlighted. The workshop also discussed coordination issues, and ways in which such coordination and collaboration could be enhanced. The following provides a brief synopsis of major points raised.

In preparation for the workshop, the Division for the Advancement of Women compiled an inventory of United Nations system activities on violence against women which was available to the meeting in draft form. The inventory, prepared on the basis of responses to a questionnaire, provides information about each entity's mandate and policy framework that guides its work on violence against women; areas of focus; and major activities (policy development and research; awareness raising and advocacy; and operational activities including capacity building and training). The final version of the inventory is intended to strengthen the information base within the United Nations system on this critical issue.

Participants noted the role, in their own work on violence against women, of several international and regional human rights instruments, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Bélem do Pará); of global and regional policy instruments and resolutions by intergovernmental bodies as well as guidance by expert bodies. These include: the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (General Assembly resolution 48/104), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, General Assembly resolution 52/86 containing model strategies and practical measures on the elimination of violence against women in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and General Recommendation 19 on violence against women of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. They also include policies and guidelines that are specific to an agency, such as the WHO resolution 96 on violence against women as a public health issue, and the HABITAT women safety audit.

Participants identified continuing gaps and challenges in the knowledge base concerning violence against women, especially in regard to data collection on all forms

and manifestations of violence against women, and in regard to impact assessments. Comparable statistics remained inadequate, although efforts such as the WHO Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women contributed significantly to enhancing the knowledge base. Collection methods likewise needed to be improved, and capacity of national statistical offices to collect such data strengthened. There was also a need for stronger support and funding for research, including on the linkages between violence against women and other threats to women's human rights.

Participants highlighted their major areas of activities at global, regional and national level, including support for legislative and policy development, support for victims, and advocacy and capacity building efforts. They pointed to work on sexual exploitation and abuse in emergency and humanitarian settings; the role of men and boys; trafficking in women; violence against women in the workplace; domestic violence; the links between violence against women and HIV/AIDS; the public health and criminal justice aspects of violence against women; violence against girls; support for human rights treaty bodies and special procedures; and data collection and indicator development.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants agreed to take a series of steps so as to achieve a more comprehensive and well-coordinated system-wide response to violence against women. These steps will be taken in regard to the legal and policy frameworks that guide United Nations system efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women; data collection and research; awareness-raising, communication and dissemination of good practices; coordinated response at the national level; resource mobilization; and coordination mechanisms at the international level. Conclusions and steps to be taken in regard to each of these areas are summarized below.

a. Legal and policy frameworks that guide United Nations system efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women

Participants confirmed that the work of the entities of the United Nations system on violence against women is based on the existing comprehensive legal and policy framework. This framework clarifies that violence against women and girls is a human rights concern and requires a response within that context. In addition, specific policies are in place in many entities to address violence against women in relation to their respective mandates. Relevant entities are also guided by the Secretary-General's Bulletin on sexual exploitation and abuse.¹

¹ See the *Inventory of activities of the United Nations system on violence against women (Division for the Advancement of Women, 2006)* which gives details of the mandates, policies and activities of the United Nations system on violence against women.

The multi-dimensional nature of violence against women and its developmental implications requires a cross-cutting and systematic approach, within a human rights-based approach to programming.

At the same time, the discussion revealed that in some instances, the absence of agency-specific policies perpetuates weak institutional commitment to, and support for, work on violence against women. Lack of understanding of the relevance of violence against women to the specific mandate of an entity, or an unclear policy, makes it more difficult to integrate efforts to combat violence against women into sectoral work.

In response to this assessment, participants agreed to take the following steps:

- ✓ Undertake entity-specific mapping exercises to assess gaps in policies and related inadequate attention to violence against women in programmes and activities;
- ✓ Strengthen awareness of the intersection of violence against women and sectoral areas, such as for example between violence against women and HIV/AIDS, development or food security;
- ✓ Strengthen entity-specific implementation of policies, and enhance accountability, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
- ✓ Establish, or strengthen mechanisms – within entities – to enhance cooperation on violence against women between gender focal points and sector-specific staff.

b. Data collection and research on violence against women

Participants noted the significant increase in available data and statistics on violence against women, as well as significant remaining gaps. Several entities are either directly involved in, or provide support to data collection efforts at the national level. Tools, such as the WHO instrument on ethical and safety guidelines for researching domestic violence against women, are also increasingly becoming available.

Participants noted that insufficient information exists about the effectiveness of measures to reduce/combat violence against women in general, including those supported and funded by entities of the United Nations system. While a number of efforts have been undertaken to assess the costs of violence against women, little has been done to cost, for example, the implementation of comprehensive national action plans.

In response to this assessment, participants agreed to take the following steps:

- ✓ Conduct mapping exercises, at regional/national level, of existing data and data collection efforts, with the involvement of national machineries for the advancement of women and national statistical offices;
- ✓ Make greater use of existing data and support standardization of data collection efforts, including through the use of existing collection instruments and tools;
- ✓ Involve, or consult those with the requisite expertise within the United Nations system when embarking on any kind of data collection activities on violence against women, and ensure women's safety in data collection efforts;

- ✓ Document good practice in data collection, and disseminate these within the United Nations system;
- ✓ Exercise quality control over research for which funding is provided;
- ✓ Support operations research to strengthen the evidence base on violence against women;
- ✓ Support or develop methodologies to undertake impact assessments, including indicators, and conduct impact assessments of programmes and projects that are supported by the United Nations system;
- ✓ Support costing exercises of comprehensive strategies to combat violence against women.

c. Awareness raising, communication, and dissemination of good practices

Participants noted the work done within the United Nations system to compile and share promising practices in preventing/eliminating violence against women. Opportunities existed to replicate or scale up such projects in other settings. However, participants noted a need to improve communication and feedback within and between entities, regional commissions, country teams and headquarters to strengthen knowledge about such opportunities. In addition, the United Nations system’s advocacy/bridge-building role at national level offered entry points to advocate for concerted national action to tackle violence against women.

In response to this assessment, participants agreed to take the following steps:

- ✓ Identify and support “drivers” to lead national-level efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women, such as civic, community or political leaders;
- ✓ Strengthen partnerships and stakeholder coalitions at various levels, including the regional and local levels, especially those that already exist outside the United Nations system;
- ✓ Encourage the inclusion of advocacy activities in national strategies/action plans to eliminate violence against women;
- ✓ Document and share information about activities implemented individually or collectively by the United Nations, and highlight in particular multi-sectoral approaches to preventing and responding to violence against women;
- ✓ Encourage United Nations country teams and theme groups to place priority on efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women, and provide support to such activities.

d. Coordinated responses at the national level

Participants stressed that the United Nations system is in a unique position to promote, support and advocate for national level action to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls. To that end, existing mechanisms and processes can be used more effectively, such as reporting processes under international human rights instruments, those concerning the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and poverty reduction strategies (PRSs).

Participants discussed opportunities for increasing the impact of their work on violence against women at the national level. Relevant efforts should aim at enhancing action by national and local partners, as well as strengthening coordination and collaboration among United Nations entities, in particular the United Nations country team.

In response to this assessment, participants agreed to take the following steps to support action by national and local partners:

- ✓ Advocate for enhanced national implementation of global commitments to eliminate violence against women and girls;
- ✓ Advocate for the use of international and regional human rights instruments on the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls;
- ✓ Support, encourage and initiate, where possible, policy dialogue about violence against women at national and local level that includes ‘conventional’ and ‘non-conventional’ interlocutors, such as national machineries for the advancement of women, finance ministries, national statistical offices, local governments and other entities;
- ✓ Support national and local efforts, such as preparation and implementation of national action plans and other instruments and initiatives, to combat violence against women, and provide funding for such efforts;
- ✓ Advocate for inclusion of a focus on violence against women in national development strategies;
- ✓ Use National Development Forums, where they exist, to lobby for attention to violence against women in national planning tools;
- ✓ Advocate for inclusion of measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women in conflict prevention and peace-building strategies and programmes, and in responses to humanitarian crises;
- ✓ Advocate and support the use of planning, programming and reporting tools to tackle violence against women, including reporting/follow-up processes under international human rights instruments, national Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reports, poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) outcomes;
- ✓ Support capacity-building of all stakeholders at the national and local/municipal level to address violence against women – these should include law enforcement, judiciary, media, civil society, workers and employers organizations, national statistical offices, and national human rights institutions;
- ✓ Support partnerships, multi-stakeholder participation as well as coalition building at national and local level to prevent and eliminate violence against women, including resource mobilization for programmes and activities.

Participants also agreed to take the following steps to strengthen coordination and collaboration among United Nations entities, in particular the United Nations country team:

- ✓ Jointly plan and implement capacity-building efforts for United Nations country teams on violence against women;
- ✓ Advocate for a leadership role of United Nations Resident Coordinators, and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General where applicable, in calling for action to prevent and eliminate violence against women;
- ✓ Enhance links, feedback and communication between United Nations entities, and in particular between the national, regional and global levels, when working on violence against women;
- ✓ Support and encourage joint programming at country level on violence against women, and improve country-level coordination;
- ✓ Make better use of 'Action 2' and integrate measures to combat violence against women in human rights-related programming.

Participants agreed to discuss further the proposal of piloting in some countries a coordinated system-wide approach to violence against women, including selection of potential pilot country/ies, time line, participating entities, and other aspects. This discussion is anticipated to take place at the time of the annual meeting of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (February 2006).

e. Resource mobilization

Participants noted that efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women remain significantly under-resourced at all levels, notwithstanding existing massive demand and absorption capacity. They acknowledged donors' reluctance to provide resources in the absence of impact assessments of past efforts, but noted that funding was also required to implement such assessments.

Participants underlined that fundraising strategies must take into account donor reluctance/fatigue to support fragmented, apparently duplicative or overlapping proposals from United Nations entities.

Participants noted the difficulties for obtaining resources to implement violence prevention work. They highlighted the need to tap 'mainstream' resources for activities aimed at preventing/eliminating violence against women, including by incorporating measures on violence against women into the PRSPs. Opportunities to expand such 'mainstream' funding existed both at global and national level. At the same time, resources needed to be secured for the Trust Fund to eliminate violence against women, as a fund specifically devoted to combating violence against women, as well as activities of other entities on violence against women.

In response to this assessment, participants agreed to take the following steps:

- ✓ Advocate for increased resources for the United Nations Trust Fund for violence against women;
- ✓ Seek out, and utilize, mainstream funding mechanisms at national level, such as PRSPs;

- ✓ Encourage relevant stakeholders to tap into other trust funds at the global level, for example those in the field of human rights;
- ✓ Enhance awareness of the inter-sections between violence against women and other areas such as HIV/AIDS, or emergency situations, so as to increase potential
- ✓ Consider up-scaling projects initially funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for violence against women;
- ✓ Seek funding for impact assessments of projects supported by the United Nations.

f. Coordination mechanisms at the international level

Participants confirmed their commitment to make better use of existing coordination mechanisms to strengthen collaboration on violence against women. They proposed that the next session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) consider the establishment of a Task Force on violence against women so as to carry forward the work commenced at the workshop.

Participants also agreed to take steps to enhance inter-action with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, as well as with other special procedures where there is a strong link to violence against women. Stronger interface with regional mechanisms such as the African Union (AU), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Council of Europe will also be further explored.

Participants agreed to continue to refine several issues for discussion and possible action by the IANWGE at its next session, in regard to violence against women. These include:

- ✓ Modalities for better interaction of the IANWGE with UNDG;
- ✓ Involvement of the high-level committee for programmes (HLCP) and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB);
- ✓ Modalities for piloting the coordinated system-wide approach in identified countries;
- ✓ Follow-up to the Secretary-General's study on violence against women.

* * *

ANNEX I

CONCEPT NOTE

Introduction

In December 2003, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare an in-depth study on all forms and manifestations of violence against women (A/RES/58/185). As part of its preparation of the in-depth study, the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is convening a workshop for entities of the United Nations system, from 5 to 7 December 2005, at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The resolution calls for close cooperation with all relevant United Nations bodies in the preparation of the study. Many UN entities participate in the Task Force set up by the Division for the Advancement of Women, provide inputs and feedback for the study. ECE, WHO and UNODC collaborated with the Division in the convening of two expert group meetings (see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/index.htm>). ECLAC coordinates a regional inter-agency group to contribute to the study. An interim report was submitted to the Assembly at its 60th session (A/60/211). The study will be presented to the Assembly at its 61st session in the fall of 2006.

Attention to violence against women in its many different forms and manifestations by entities of the United Nations system has increased in parallel with the expanded consideration of this issue by intergovernmental and expert bodies such as the General Assembly and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. United Nations entities have developed specific programmes on violence against women or include efforts to combat this scourge within the framework of their overall mandates and objectives. Entities contribute to research, normative and policy development, provide services and support to victims of violence, implement advocacy and awareness raising activities on particular forms of violence against women, and provide funding. Activities are implemented from the national to the global level, in cooperation with Governments, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

As the impact of violence against women on the achievement of other goals and objectives of the UN system, in particular those of the Millennium Declaration, are becoming more obvious, all United Nations entities have a stake in preventing and ultimately eliminating violence against women. The 2005 World Summit outcome document underlined commitment to the elimination of all form of discrimination and violence against women and the girl child (see A/60/1, para. 58).

The Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, chaired by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, serves as a forum for exchange of information, coordination of policy and programming approaches, and multi-entity collaboration in the development and implementation of common strategies to combat particular forms of violence against women.

Preparation of the study is an opportunity to explore how the entities of the United Nations system can strengthen their response to violence against women as a human rights violation and an obstacle to the achievement of gender equality and other goals in the areas of peace and development, and to ensure systematic attention by all entities to the many different forms and manifestations of violence against women from a policy and operational perspective. It is also an opportunity to prepare the groundwork for effective follow-up, by the United Nations system, to the recommendations that will emanate from the Secretary-General's study on violence against women.

The Division is compiling an inventory of United Nations system activities on violence against women to strengthen the common knowledge base on work that is being implemented by the entities of the United Nations system to combat all forms of violence against women.

Participants

All entities of the United Nations system have been invited to send participant(s) to the workshop. Designation of gender focal points, or focal points on violence against women was particularly encouraged.

Objectives

The workshop will aim to identify strategies for ensuring a more consistent and cohesive response to all forms and manifestations of violence against women by the United Nations system. It will seek to identify gaps in the policy and operational response of the United Nations system, and areas of potential overlap and inconsistencies in approaches. The workshop will also address the question of resources currently available for activities to combat violence against women. It will aim to reach agreement on a more comprehensive and well-coordinated system-wide response to violence against women, including mechanisms for enhanced collaboration and coordination.

Outcome

The workshop will aim to assess the current status of United Nations system work on violence against women, including policy and programme frameworks, and arrive at agreement on:

- B. Areas requiring more attention, and steps to do so
- C. Opportunities for enhancing synergies in the work on violence against women across the UN system
- D. Measures to enhance the resource base for work on violence against women
- E. Mechanisms for better collaboration, coordination and information exchange.

Format

The workshop will comprise of presentations in plenary followed by comments and discussion. Day one (5 December) will be devoted to discussion about *WHAT* is being done (content issues), the approaches used by different entities to tackle violence against women (ie primarily a public health, crime prevention, human rights perspective), at different levels (ie global, regional, national), areas of focus (ie forms and manifestations

of violence against women), and main types of activities (ie research, policy, operational). It will seek to elucidate issues of conceptual coherence, and whether, or to what extent, all issues of violence against women are comprehensively addressed across the system. It will also seek to identify solutions for identified problems. Furthermore, discussion should identify ways in which the UN system will respond systematically and comprehensively to the recommendations that will emanate from the Secretary-General's study.

The presentations will focus on particular aspects, such as policy and programme frameworks; operational activities; advocacy, capacity building and awareness raising efforts. Within each of these areas, gaps and overlaps will be addressed in terms of forms of violence dealt with, constraints and opportunities for addressing them highlighted, and proposals for future work presented. They will highlight challenges and opportunities for enhancing leadership and stakeholder participation, and point out opportunities for enhancing attention to inter-sectionality with entities' overall mandates.

Day two (6 December) will be devoted to discussion about *HOW* the entities of the UN system could enhance coordination and collaboration on violence against women in order to achieve improved results. The meeting will also consider ways for increased attention, within the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), to the issue of violence against women.

Following plenary discussions, working groups will identify points of agreement and concrete recommendations for next steps by the entities of the UN system. Their reports back to plenary will be the basis for the adoption of the workshop's report.

ANNEX II

PROGRAMME OF WORK

NB: Scheduled presentations should not exceed 7 minutes. They are intended as a “kick-off” to help focus and structure the discussion

Monday, 5 December 2005

10:00 – 11:00 am **Opening statement by Ms Rachel Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women**

Overview of the programme of work

Overview of UN system activities – Presentation of Inventory

11:00 am – 1:00 pm **Research, policy and normative frameworks**

This segment will address *WHAT* is being done. In this segment, issues such as the following should be addressed:

- What are entities’ main areas of focus, and what gaps and challenges are we facing within our respective areas of focus, and with regard to our respective entity’s primary mandate?
- What gaps can we identify, in terms of coverage of and attention to forms of violence, from a system-wide perspective? How do these gaps affect the overall effectiveness of the UN system in the area of violence against women?
- What are entities’ good practices that need to be more widely shared, utilized?
- How can we build synergies among entities, and across various focus areas?
 - ECLAC
 - OHCHR
 - WHO
 - UNODC

Presentations will be followed by comments and discussion

3:00 – 5:00 pm **Operational activities, capacity building, advocacy, resources**

This segment will address *WHAT* is being done. In this segment, issues such as the following should be addressed:

- What are the main areas of activities, what gaps and challenges are we facing within our respective areas of focus, and with regard to our respective entity’s primary objectives?
- What gaps can we identify, in terms of types of violence addressed, regions/countries, as well as dedicated resources?
- What is the focus of country teams/theme groups in regard to violence against women, what institutional and resource constraints do they face, and how can those be overcome?
- What are entities’ good practices that need to be more widely shared, utilized?

- What are some of the innovative multi-agency strategies for the elimination of violence against women, how were they developed, and what impact have they had?
 - UNICEF
 - WFP
 - UNIFEM
 - UNDP
 - UNFPA

Presentations will be followed by comments and discussion

Tuesday, 6 December 2005

10:00am – 1:00pm Building institutional linkages and frameworks

Based on the discussion on approaches of the first day, the second day will focus on *HOW* we can enhance system-wide coordination and collaboration in the area of violence against women. Issues such as the following should be addressed:

- What coordination/collaboration mechanisms are currently in place? What are their shortcomings?
- What mechanisms do we need to raise the scope, scale and impact of the UN system's work on violence against women?
- What are the roles of entity heads and focal points?
- How can we successfully link global/regional with country level activities?
- How do we build knowledge networks that enable regular exchange of information, expertise, experiences and good practices?
- How will the UN system carry forward the recommendations to emanate from the study on violence against women?

3:00 – 6:00 pm Working groups

The number of working groups remains to be determined. Two working groups could be established, whereby one working group would develop recommendations on activities, and the second group would work on institutional frameworks and mechanisms.

Wednesday, 7 December 2005

11:00 – 1:00 pm Review and adoption of report and strategy for future action

Lunchtime: Please join us for a WHO/DAW panel to present the 2005 WHO multi-country study on violence against women, to highlight the Secretary-General's study on violence against women and the results of workshop.

ANNEX III

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