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Aide-Mémoire

**Expert Group Meeting
Good practices in national action plans on violence against women**

**United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women
in collaboration with the United Nations
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean**

**United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
13-15 September 2010**

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly has highlighted the importance of comprehensive integrated national plans dedicated to combating all forms of violence against women. It has called on States to establish such plans in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, and has called upon the international community, including the United Nations system, to support and enhance national efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls, including, upon request, in the development and implementation of national action plans on the elimination of violence against women¹.

2. In order to support such efforts, the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, is convening an expert group meeting on good practices for the development and implementation of national action plans on violence against women, to be held at ECLAC/Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 13-15 September 2010.

¹ See, in particular, General Assembly resolutions 64/137 of 2009, 63/155 of 2008, and 61/143 of 2006.

II. Background

3. States have clear obligations under international law to address violence against women. States are required to exercise due diligence to prevent acts of violence against women; to investigate such acts and prosecute and punish perpetrators; and to provide redress and relief to victims.

4. The requirement to adopt and implement national action plans to address violence against women is set out in international and regional human rights instruments and policy documents. The international human rights treaty bodies, in particular the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women², as well as the Committee on Human Rights³, regularly call on States parties to develop, implement and monitor national plans of actions to address violence against women.

5. The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, urges Governments to formulate and implement, at all appropriate levels, plans of action to eliminate violence against women⁴. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the General Assembly in December 1993, provides that States should consider the possibility of developing national plans of action to promote the protection of women against any form of violence⁵. The former Commission on Human Rights also called on States to formulate, implement and promote, at all appropriate levels, plans of action, including time-bound measurable targets where appropriate, to eliminate violence against women and girls⁶.

6. At the regional level, the Council of Europe recommended to the member States to adopt national plans of action to combat violence against women⁷. In a recent resolution, the European Parliament urged its member States to improve their national laws and policies to combat all forms of violence against women, in particular through the development of comprehensive national action plans to combat violence against women⁸.

III. The rationale for national action plans

7. National action plans and strategies on violence against women provide an overarching framework for a systematic, results-based approach to addressing violence against women. Such plans and strategies can enhance coordination among relevant sectors and provide timelines for activities. The Secretary-General recommended in his 2006 in-depth study on all forms of violence against women⁹ that States institute plans of

² CEDAW/C/HTI/CO/7 para.25, A/57/38 para.332, A/55/38 para.70.

³ CCPR/C/AUS/CO/5, para.17; CCPR/C/SDN/CO/3, para.14.

⁴ Paragraph 124(j).

⁵ A/RES/48/104.

⁶ Resolutions 2003/45 and 2005/41, on the elimination of violence against women.

⁷ Recommendation Rec(2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the protection of women against violence.

⁸ Resolution of 26 November 2009 on the elimination of violence against women.

⁹ A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1.

action that are regularly monitored and updated by Governments in consultation with civil society, in particular NGOs, and women's groups and networks. The Secretary-General's global campaign "UNiTE to end violence against women", launched in 2008, identified the adoption and implementation of multi-sectoral national plans of action as one of the five key outcomes of the campaign, to be achieved in all countries by 2015.

8. Numerous countries have in place dedicated plans on violence against women. In some countries, plans are in place on a particular form of violence, such as domestic violence, trafficking, female genital mutilation/cutting and forced marriage. Many national action plans on violence against women set out measures in relation to support for victims/survivors; prevention, including awareness-raising and education; training and capacity-building; prosecution, punishment and rehabilitation of perpetrators; and research. The importance and usefulness of action plans has been confirmed by the fact that some States have in place their second or third action plan, which are often based on lessons learned or impact assessments of earlier efforts. In such subsequent plans, countries have enhanced attention to specific groups of women, or different forms of violence, which may not have been addressed in the first plan. Action plans and strategies to address violence against women are also increasingly adopted at the provincial and local levels, as well as by independent public and private institutions, such as universities.

9. There has been an increase in collaboration between the State and other stakeholders, including entities of the United Nations system, in the development of plans, strategies and programmes in relation to violence against women. Numerous States have systematically incorporated targets and activities to combat violence against women in other existing national action plans, for example on health, HIV/AIDS, development/social inclusion, and integration/migration.

IV. Objectives, outcomes and organizational aspects of the expert group meeting

A. Objectives of the expert group meeting

10. The main objectives of the expert group meeting are to:

- Review national action plans on violence against women and analyze different approaches and their effectiveness in relation to, inter alia:
 - the process of consultation in the development of national action plans;
 - the adoption of national action plans;
 - the areas covered, including measures related to prevention, protection and support of victims/survivors, and prosecution;
 - lead institutional mechanisms, and cooperation and coordination among different sectors involved;
 - funding and sustainability;
 - monitoring and evaluation processes and mechanisms.

- Identify key elements and good practices for the development, content, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national action plans on violence against women.

B. Expected outcome

11. On the basis of the outcome of discussions and analysis, the expert group meeting will:

- Elaborate a model framework for national action plans on violence against women to serve as a tool for Member States and other stakeholders in their efforts to adopt and implement such plans.
- This model framework will contain:
 - guidelines for the development, content, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of plans;
 - good practice examples from States.

C. Methods of work

12. The EGM will meet in plenary and in working groups. In an opening plenary, a background paper, providing proposed elements for a model framework for national action plans on violence against women, will be presented and discussed. Based on the background paper and discussions in plenary, working groups will discuss specific issues/themes and draft elements for a model framework for national action plans on violence against women. The proposals of working groups will be reviewed and further refined in plenary, which will finalize and adopt the model framework for national action plans on violence against women.

D. Profile of participants

13. The expert group meeting will be attended by approximately eighteen (18) experts from all parts of the world, with in-depth knowledge and experience on national action plans addressing violence against women, including government officials, lawyers, non-governmental organizations, academics and activists. A small number of observers from United Nations entities will also attend. Staff of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the ECLAC/Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean will support the meeting.

14. The Division for the Advancement of Women will provide travel, accommodation and daily subsistence allowance for invited experts. The ECLAC/Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean will host the meeting and provide associated logistical support.

E. Documentation

15. The documentation for the meeting will include: a consultant's background paper commissioned by the Division for the Advancement of Women, providing proposed elements for a model framework for national action plans on violence against women, based on a review of national action plans on violence against women from different parts of the world; discussion notes prepared by experts on key elements/aspects of national action plans; and a paper prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women on the international and regional legal and policy framework. The working language of the expert group meeting will be English.