



Introductory Brief & Suggestions:

**Formulating NATIONAL ACTION PLANS (NAPs)
to END VIOLENCE against WOMEN and GIRLS**

This initial brief reflects internal notes prepared by UNIFEM's Ending Violence against Women Section for its provision of advisory and technical assistance services on request by government authorities. Its aim is to provide guidance based on promising practice and emerging priorities, in support of evidence-based, effective policy development.

This draft is also shared as an input and reference document for the Expert Group Meeting organized by the Division on the Advancement of Women (part of UN Women) on National Action Plans, Trinidad & Tobago, September 2010.

Overview

- National Action Plans (NAPs) are overall considered by experts to be inherently good practice as they are based on one comprehensive plan of action involving a multiple-sector coordinated approach.
- NAPS were called for at the World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995, following also a recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna 1993). This call to action resulted in several countries creating their own NAP.
- The United Nations Secretary-General's Campaign *UNiTE to End Violence against Women 2008-2015*, which is tied to the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), calls on all countries to have adequately-resourced National Action Plans adopted and underway by 2015—one of the five priority outcomes for country level action (see the Framework for Action).
- Similarly, recent UN General Assembly Resolutions have called for governments to develop NAPs (see para. 8 of UN General Assembly Resolution of 2006, 61/143: *Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women*, and paras. 16(a)(f)(g) and 17 of UN General Assembly Resolution of 2008, 63/155: *Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women*). Also relevant are the landmark Security Council Resolutions on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Relying on the Global Evidence-Base of Emerging and Good Practice

- While multi-sectoral NAPs are overall considered good practice in and of themselves, there has not been an effort to date to rigorously assess or systematize cross-country experiences regarding National Action Plans (NAPs).
- In general, the field of gender-based violence has a dearth of evaluation to prove what is really effective – but there is a meaningful body of what is considered promising or good practice based on cumulative experience--both for the development of NAPs, as well as for many of the specific components that NAPs commit to delivering (e.g. services, justice, prevention, etc.):
 - *It is important to work towards evidence-based approaches when policy content is identified to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of resource utilization.*

For a key resource for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of NAPs, see UNIFEM's (part of UNWomen) Global Virtual Knowledge Centre on Ending Violence against Women and Girls: www.endvawnow.org.

For sample NAPs from other countries, see the Secretary-General's Database developed by the UN Division on the Advancement of Women (part of UNWomen) available at <http://www.un.org/esa/vawdatabase>.

In formulating a NAP, it is advisable to undertake a review of the leading experiences and evidence base to date at national, regional and global levels, in order to identify the approaches, strategies and models most relevant to the national context. This can serve as an important basis for the identification of specific strategies and intervention models for investment and costing to be put forth in a NAP.

KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN FORMULATING A NAP

Guiding Principles

- The NAP should be framed by guiding principles, which have conceptual as well as practical implications for how the NAP is formulated, implemented and its progress tracked (e.g. human rights, gender equality, responsiveness to diversity of groups and contexts, participatory processes, multi-sectoriality for holistic approaches, application of the evidence-base to date, etc.)
- The human rights and safety of women and girls must be at the forefront of the NAP, specifically laid out in the laws, policies, protocols and programmes that are covered or linked to the NAP. These rights include women's rights to personal security, privacy and confidentiality, informed and autonomous decision-making, and rights to justice, health and social services.

Concept and Definition of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

- NAPs should have a clear and broad definition of gender-based violence that is inclusive of all forms and manifestations of violence against women and girls (e.g. physical, sexual, psychological and economic); and addresses the various spaces in which it occurs (e.g. home, streets, schools, work, etc.), recognizing the continuum of gender-based violence in public and private spaces. Violence against women and girls includes, but is not limited to, domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, stalking, marital rape, child marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful practices.
 - Definitions of specific forms of violence can also be broad and inclusive. For example, based on existing country examples and subject to local context: a broad definition of Domestic Violence (DV) could include former or current intimate partners, including those not residing in the household, without distinction as to legal marriage. The definition could also include any individual in the household (e.g. domestic workers and immigrants).

Policy and Legal Framework

- The NAP should be framed within the context of the country's existing commitments to end violence against women and girls—from its national laws and policies, to regional and international inter-governmental conventions and agreements. This includes establishing synergies and complementarities with other existing national policies, including poverty reduction, development, gender equality, HIV, health, education and youth plans and strategies.
- The NAP Plan should integrate and comply with existing international human rights standards, reflected in leading agreements such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the

Convention on the Rights of the Child (among other international human rights treaty bodies and their recommendations); the Beijing Platform for Action, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, General Assembly Resolutions on Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (annual since 2006), and relevant Security Council and Human Rights Council Resolutions. (See UN Human Rights Council Resolutions 11/2 of 2009 and 14/12 of 2010, on *Accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women*. Resolution 14/12 (para. 19) explicitly calls on governments to establish or strengthen plans of action to eliminate violence against women and girls that clearly define accountability mechanisms for prevention and that are supported by the necessary resources.)

Importantly, the country reports and recommendations of human rights committees and mechanisms provide specific guidance and imply State Party duties and obligations for follow up, e.g. those of the CEDAW and other relevant treaty body committees, as well as the missions and findings of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Setting the Main Parameters of the NAP: Issues of Focus, Coverage and Diversified Strategies

- The NAP should be comprehensive and broad, while at the same time identify strategic priorities and areas of priority focus.
- The scope and specific forms of violence against women and girls that the NAP will predominantly focus on should be considered, for example, by prioritizing attention to the most common and prevalent forms of violence first.
- Diversified strategies should be identified for each form of violence
 - For example, domestic violence and sexual violence each require differentiated strategies, processes and professional skills (even in cases of sexual violence within marriage or domestic partnerships).
- Consideration should be given to identifying strategies that are both universal (that is, covering all the population in general) and those that need to be tailored to specific groups affected by gender-based violence.
 - For example, some groups of women and girls and communities, particularly the most excluded and marginalized, require specifically-tailored strategies (e.g. impoverished women and communities, HIV-positive women, adolescent girls, out-of-school girls and young women, women who are disabled, displaced, migrant, or indigenous, women who have been trafficked, domestic workers, women who are isolated socially or geographically, etc.).

- Universal strategies do not necessarily reach all population groups. For example, in-school programmes will not reach vast numbers of girls and boys in settings with limited school attendance and high rates of school drop-out. Written informational material about legal rights will be unsuitable for illiterate groups, or for groups from linguistic minorities unless it has been translated; and so forth.
- In determining priorities and strategies for the NAP, the various settings in which violence against women and girls occurs should be accounted for (e.g. households, streets, schools, workplaces, post-conflict situations, etc.). Importantly, strategies that may work in urban settings may not be applicable or feasible in rural areas.
- NAPs, by definition, imply nation-wide coverage, for universal access by all residents for its intended benefits. The NAP may also need to consider explicitly referencing particular areas or groups for priority attention—especially impoverished groups, excluded geographic areas, and/or pockets of exacerbated levels of gender-based violence—with attention to diversification of strategies based on the particular socio-cultural and geographic contexts.
- In all cases, NAPs should account for local culture and the specific contexts in which the violence occurs. It is important to be knowledgeable of the public attitudes regarding the issue of violence against women and girls. These attitudes may vary depending on the sex, age, and other characteristics of particular communities or population subgroups. Critical misconceptions may exist that the NAP may need to dispel to be effective. Being cognizant of such attitudes and levels of knowledge can inform the delineation of the NAP, the first steps required to garner public support for the NAP, and to develop targeted social mobilization and educational strategies on issues of violence of women and girls.
- Similarly, it is important to know the starting point in terms of the attitudes, knowledge and relative degree of commitment from those responsible for and expected to deliver on the NAP's commitments (i.e. policy-makers and public officials from various sectors, service providers). This should form part of the baseline studie/s to inform the NAP's strategies and gage progress.

Domains of Intervention: Prevention and Response

NAPs should address both domains of intervention : Prevention and Response

- *Response*: Most efforts to date have focused on providing already-abused women and girls with emergency services and supports. In most countries, nonetheless, the response to survivors/victims of gender-based violence is limited in coverage and quality, with most women and girls lacking access to basic supports, justice and resources in cases of violence and abuse.

A NAP is a critical opportunity to identify and set specific targets for achieving universal access to key services for women and girls survivors of violence.

- *Prevention:* This domain is a largely ‘new frontier’ in many countries of the world, as there has been limited attention and investment in developing effective primary prevention strategies-- that is, stopping gender-based violence from occurring in the first place. At the same time, there is a growing body of evidence and consensus pointing to particularly promising strategies.

Primary prevention is the only way to put an end to gender-based violence, and is the most strategic and cost-effective intervention to adopt in the medium to longer-term.

- Prevention efforts should always be accompanied by having services and referrals in place for already-abused women and girls, on both ethical and practical grounds.
 - For example, when public outreach and community mobilization efforts are successful, more women and girls will ‘break the silence’ and seek help and report their abuse. A minimum of relevant sources of support need to be in place as demand increases – which can include institutions and services, to trusted public service providers and individuals or volunteers in the community who have been trained to initially counsel and refer cases of abuse.
- The Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences has also called for strengthened ‘due diligence’ standards, where both prevention and response are the responsibilities of States.
- Australia is a lead country in the world with a prevention-focused, longer-term and adequately-resourced NAP: *Time for Action: The National Council’s Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, 2009-2021 (Plan of Action)*, focuses on strategies and actions for prevention, early intervention, enhanced service delivery, and the justice system.

Policy and Legal Reforms

- NAPS should consider what critical legal reforms are required to address violence against women and girls, and to ultimately improve the NAP’s efficacy.
 - What legal reforms are needed as they relate to violence against women specifically, and more broadly as they relate to gender discrimination? NAPs should address the root causes of violence against women and girls for sustained, long-term change.
 - Domestic legislation (including immigration, labor, criminal/penal codes, and family law) should be harmonized, since national laws may be inconsistent or contradictory among

themselves without amendments. The task of determining these legal gaps or inconsistencies could form part of the situation analysis/mapping for the NAP.

- Inconsistencies in the legal framework should also be considered vis-à-vis international human rights standards, recommendations and definitions of gender-based violence.
- In harmonizing these separate legislative frameworks, it is critical to consider a holistic response for women and girl survivors (including whether legal and policy provisions cover financial and employment supports to enable women to escape abusive situations; housing and temporary safe shelter; vocational training and educational opportunities so that women survivors can achieve economic autonomy; rights to custody of children and nationality rights; property and inheritance rights; etc.).
- Attention should also be paid to whether current legislative frameworks address and penalize the range of forms of gender-based violence (i.e. sexual harassment in public spaces, transport, streets; marital rape; etc. – or remain narrow in their focus, for example, on domestic violence only/mostly); and whether the consequences of violence are legally addressed in terms of justice, including civil remedies and reparations.
 - Are sexual violence (in particular marital rape), and domestic violence criminalized in the country's penal code? Is trafficking in persons an offence under the penal code? Are there measures of accountability, including the prosecution of perpetrators, convictions where appropriate, and just sentences? Legal provisions should address procedural safeguards that protect survivors/victims from being re-victimized during the court process; and that provide safety for witnesses and others trying to assist the survivors.
 - Are there civil remedies for women who are victims of gender-based violence? Are victims afforded monetary compensation for emotional and physical injuries?

Setting Minimal Standards

- While there is no definitive global consensus on the precise definition or contents of what would constitute a package of 'Minimum Standards' for universal access, there are emerging parameters such as those relating to the immediate and short-term response:
 - Emergency police protection and personal security of women and girls at risk or survivors of violence.
 - Universal access to free 24-hour emergency hotlines and referral services, including psychosocial counseling for abused women and their children
 - Universal access to post-rape care
 - Universal access to shelter and safe housing
 - Free legal aid services

- The Council of Europe has issued recommended minimum standards covering the above and setting performance standards, calculating for example, that a minimum of one shelter for every 10, 000 inhabitants should be available that provides a safe haven, crisis support, and referrals for counseling and other assistance (variations subject to population density in any given country/region/area); an advocacy and counseling centre per 50,000 women, with a specialized violence against women counseling service in every regional city; a rape crisis centre per 200,000 women; and that post-rape care should include pregnancy testing, emergency contraception, post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent HIV and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, treatment for injuries and psychosocial counseling.
- There is a broader concept of ‘shelter’ emerging with alternatives to shelters and safe houses being explored, including the removal of perpetrators from the household as a good practice (instead of the survivors/victims and their children), with appropriate police and court responses in place; and innovation as regards community-based schemes such as temporary host families and volunteers, utilization of traditional mechanisms (protection by village elders), or innovative schemes such as public-private partnerships to fund hotel vouchers for abused women.
- The NAP’s situation analysis can assess the issue of minimum standards, including whether and what minimum standards may already be in place, if and how they are being implemented and by which parties/sectors; and inform the NAP’s strategic opportunities and direction in this regard.
 - *NAPs offer a critical opportunity to define, establish and/or upgrade minimum standards of access and service delivery performance*

Capacity Development & Transforming Institutions and Practice

- Investing in capacity development is key to achieve sustained and lasting impact in the medium-to-longer-term. It is the institutions, partnerships, skills and knowledge that a NAP serves to advance and consolidate that can sustain progress.
- The concept of capacity development adopted should be multi-faceted and ideally consider a ‘systems approach’, within and across sectors and key actors. For example: A systems approach for a school- based programme should involve the whole school and the students’ wider community - teachers, guidance counselors, principals, parents and guardians, sporting clubs, community groups and leaders –with a continuum of in-school and out-of-school detection, referral and care systems engaging the key sectors responsible. Such a concept of capacity development goes beyond the tendency to focus almost exclusively on training activities only:
 - Are there policies and protocols in place?

- Is there institutional leadership at the highest sectoral levels to address the issue of violence against women and girls? or are strategies required to secure and sustain it?
- What are public officials' and service providers' attitudes, understanding, knowledge and skills levels about the issues of violence against women and girls? Are sensitization efforts needed early on in the process of formulating the NAP to lay the groundwork for ownership and implementation (i.e. are providers aware of their duties under existing legislation and policies to treat violence against women as a crime, etc.).
- Are there adequate and institutionalized training programmes, in line with the specific intervention packages and minimum standards being proposed in the NAP?
 - Training programmes should be aligned with the specific components and minimum standards of service delivery and educate about expectations of compliance with established performance standards.
 - For example, the NAP can establish benchmarks for the introduction of compulsory, nationally- accredited training programmes (for the police, prosecutors, and judiciary and health care providers). The content of the training should be based on and tailored to the specific services and competencies expected of trainees to enable them to implement the NAP effectively.
- Are there incentive and accountability systems in place for performance? Are there protocols within the sectors that provide guidance to officials and service providers and set operating and performance standards? Is there an existing framework that bases promotions or rewards on performance? (For example, are there consequences for failing to provide a woman with prompt police protection or quality care and referrals? Are there independent and confidential complaint mechanisms? etc.)
- Are there data and ongoing monitoring systems in place to track performance, assess use of services and women's experiences with them to ensure that the policies and services are working as intended and that victims are able to exercise their rights to these services?
- Are the proper multi-sectoral systems and partnerships in place? Are they coordinated and functioning to provide survivors/victims with holistic responses and supports?

Intervention Packages and Performance Standards

NAPs should begin to define the specific packages and performance standards for each sector, as well as across sectors, drawing on the evidence base to date of what may be most effective and lessons learned. For example:

- What are the standards of care and the package of services that should be made available by the health sector?
 - Are the responsibilities of the various levels of the health sector and service providers defined (primary to tertiary)?
 - What model approaches will be adopted? Is it one-stop centres for integrated health, legal and police services? Is the health care package for post-rape care to be delivered in integrated fashion in one visit, or will the survivor/victim need to obtain emergency contraception and pregnancy testing from one provider, post-exposure prophylaxis and psychosocial counseling in other sites? etc.
 - Performance standards for the health system should draw on emerging good practice, for example as regards mandatory reporting, which is generally not recommended: Survivors of violence should have access to medical treatment without having to first file a report with the police. Mandatory reporting of violence to the police or courts by health providers, although required in some legal systems, has been found to be counterproductive: it violates women's autonomy, decision-making and human rights, and can prevent them from seeking services; and deters providers from registering cases because of concerns of becoming embroiled in court cases.
 - Similarly, the introduction of routine screening for gender-based violence should be accompanied by ensuring that proper referrals are in place as regards police, health care and legal assistance.
- Within the judicial sector, the NAP should ensure that existing procedures do not re-victimize women survivors. This should consider emerging good practice such as ensuring that women who are going through the court process have access to women's support groups and victims' advocates; are able to testify without having to see their perpetrator (i.e. via in-camera testimony, or placement of physical barriers between them in court); their sexual history should not be permitted in the proceedings; and the burden of proof should be on the alleged perpetrator (i.e. not the victim/survivor, that is, women should not be obligated to present evidence of violence, whether medical-forensic, or via witnesses).
- If perpetrator programmes are promoted, the evidence-base on limitations of effectiveness and key lessons learned should be taken into account. For example, minimal standards to proceed with court-ordered programmes would provide guarantees to ensure women's safety and

personal security as the primary priority, including via a well-established police response and perpetrator tracking system—especially since such programmes have had limited success in reducing recidivism (repeated incidents of abuse).

- What are especially strategic delivery approaches to ensure maximum benefits?
 - For example, within the health field, an especially strategic entry point are sexual and reproductive health services: especially in poor settings, these services are the most probable contact point for a woman experiencing abuse to receive screening, counseling and care (from pediatric, to family planning, maternal-child health services, HIV-related services).

A certain degree of specificity in the NAP is important to facilitate common vision and clarification of intervention packages for implementation, and provide concrete guidance to responsible parties for effective delivery. If key elements and components are not defined in the NAP adopted, it will be more difficult to secure the commitments and actions on them later.

Building Demand and Social Mobilization Strategies

- To reach their intended objectives, the ‘supply’ (e.g. of new laws, plans, services) needs to be balanced with investments in the ‘demand’-side, through informational, educational and empowerment approaches.
 - Even with the best policies and services in place, the ‘supply’ and offer of services can fail because the public does not avail themselves of them. Lack of demand and accessibility can be attributed to a number of factors, including women’s limited information about their existence and availability, mistrust of the services, poor quality of provision, and lack of transportation, among other factors.
 - The public at large and all community members (including potential and actual perpetrators) need to know if a law makes gender-based violence a crime punishable by law, for example, or that the government has launched a national plan and is making ending it a priority.
- Women and girls should be empowered with knowledge about their human and legal rights and how to navigate processes or access resources to demand and exercise these rights. Some countries have developed a Victim Bill of Rights that informs women in clear language about their entitlements and the procedures to follow.
- Make popular versions of relevant laws and the NAP widely available, including by using mass public education and the media and locally-appropriate venues to create widespread awareness and educate women and the community at large about their content and implications.

- Mobilize communities on issues of gender equality and violence against women and girls, to establish a ‘zero tolerance’ attitude. This should include collaboration with women’s centres and advocacy groups, in addition to strategic groups such as men’s and youth organizations that promote gender equality, parents and teachers, faith-based and other pertinent groups in the local context.
- Provide concrete, widely-accessible information about where women and girls can obtain confidential services (e.g. where to call or go for assistance, are there costs involved, etc.).
- Promoting whole-community approaches can include convening community meetings or information sessions on violence against women and girls at schools, places of work and other settings. These venues provide a forum where trusted local nurses, police officers, and free legal aid providers can speak directly to the communities. As a result, women may place more trust in those services, and help dissipate the silence and barriers to reporting abuse.

Institutional Roles and Responsibilities

- It is critical to delineate specific roles and responsibilities for each institution with respect to both Prevention and Response.
- These include institutions that form part of the ‘frontline response’-- the police, health, legal aid, judicial, social and child welfare sectors; as well as additional and strategic sectors, including ministries of finance, housing, education, labour, the media, migration, the private sector and labour unions, or the tourism, sports and entertainment industries.
- Support for the multi-sectoral coordination functions is essential, a role that often falls on ministries of women’s affairs. Adequate political, institutional, staffing and budgetary support are required for the NAP to be effectively coordinated and monitored for ongoing improvements. In other instances, ministries of justice, labour or social welfare may be designated to play the lead coordinating role.
- Educational institutions (both the formal and informal systems) are central to both primary prevention (in order to support positive changes in attitudes and behaviors, as a venue for early intervention efforts); as well as to ensuring that girls have violence-free educational opportunities and are promptly detected, counseled and supported with an adequate response in cases of abuse (in school, at home, in the community).
- Response efforts should include the child and welfare sectors. In the immediacy of a case of domestic violence or sexual abuse, children will require specialized care and supports. Children who are witnesses of domestic violence or victims of abuse are at risk of experiencing long-lasting effects: these girls and boys have a higher propensity to fall into life-cycles of violence,

becoming victims or perpetrator later in life. Early intervention in the forms of psychological counseling and other services can be effective in averting and mitigating consequences.

- The housing sector should be included in an integrated service provision approach, since shelters, transitional housing and housing subsidies for women and children are necessary measures to stop the cycle of violence.
- The private sector should be engaged as employers, as in-kind contributors and funders, as media outlets and providers of vocational skills-building and employment training programmes for women survivors.

Knowledge of the starting point in the country with respect to the state of affairs as regards both prevention and response is not only fundamental to inform the formulation of the NAP; but to clearly delineate roles and benchmarks for each sector engaged, as well as the multi-sectoral performance standards in terms of collaboration and referral systems. This involves carrying out capacity development analysis on the strengths, needs and gaps of key institutions and sectors.

SETTING THE BENCHMARKS & TRACKING PROGRESS

Baselines and Situation Analyses

- Baseline information and situational analysis for the issues mentioned in this brief provides a solid basis for formulating a sound NAP. This can include mapping of existing services and responses, capacity gaps analysis, data-gathering and analysis on forms of gender-based violence and assessment of knowledge, attitudes and practices.
- When determining what data is available, it is important to note whether the country has undertaken prevalence surveys (e.g. Demographic and Health Survey, World Health Organization Survey, International Violence against Women Survey, among other national surveys). Otherwise, the NAP provides an opportunity to establish a periodic survey to measure the prevalence of violence against women, within a longer-term vision of sustained efforts to reduce violence against women.
 - Note that reducing prevalence of violence against women was not included as a target of the Millennium Development Goals because an insufficient number of countries had undertaken surveys, nor were they adequately comparable across countries.
- Are administrative and service delivery data systems in place (e.g. clinics, courts, police)? Are these data systems harmonized country-wide? Are they being used for reporting and monitoring?

- A variety of sources of available information should be considered to enrich information-gathering – official and civil society reports, experts and women’s rights leaders, community perceptions, women survivors’ experiences, etc.

Establishing Time-Lines, Targets & Meaningful Measures of Change

- The timeline and action plan should be feasible to achieve the expected results.
 - Are the activities proposed sufficient to achieve the expected results given resource implications and capacities available?
- Is the logic applied to achieve the stated results coherent and feasible?
 - For example, violence against women cannot be “reduced” through isolated or single interventions such as training lawyers, or by launching awareness-raising campaigns. A number of interventions need to happen in tandem to achieve change and results.
 - Activities may not necessarily add up to the higher-level results sought after: for example, beyond tallying how many people were trained, it is important to measure the effects of that training in terms of the improved response to abused women, whether there is increased compliance with established protocols and referrals, and what abused women report as the quality of services received.
- NAPs should consider a medium to longer-term vision and time-line, with intermediate milestones/benchmarks identified for every few years (e.g. ‘by year 3 X’ by year 5, by year 10). Violence against women and girls is a complex, deeply ingrained problem that requires change at societal, institutional/structural, community and individual levels. In addition to its widespread nature, the decades of neglect in addressing the issue means that in most contexts, there is a dearth of expertise and installed capacities in place, also requiring time to strengthen and equip adequately.
- The data-gathering, indicators and benchmarks identified to measure change should draw from the first sets of indicators recently made available and recommended for the field of violence against women, based on global expert consensus. These include those issued by the Measure Evaluation Project, the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences, and the UN (Statistical Division, Member State Friends of the Chair, other UN agencies).

Monitoring, Reporting and Accountability Systems

- The NAP should lay out the monitoring, evaluation, reporting and accountability mechanisms, which may include:
 - Formal mechanisms for tracking and reporting that are cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial.
 - A committee or national task force with a combination of public officials, parliamentarians, experts in the area of violence against women, and women's and civil society groups could be created.
 - An observatory at the national and/or regional level that monitors progress achieved, centralizes reports received from different sources and sectors, and publicizes findings (i.e. via an official website).
 - An independent oversight mechanism such as ombudspersons with an explicit portfolio and mandate to report on progress in addressing violence against women and girls.
 - Annual progress reports to Parliament by both sectoral ministers, as well as by the coordinating government body (on the Plan's overall progress).
- Assessments should be participatory and government-led at both the national and local levels. Women's groups and other civil society organizations should be included in these assessments to inform whether the policies and programmes are being implemented and functioning as originally intended.
- Collaboration with the media to distribute information on progress and challenges in implementing the NAP is an important way to engage and sustain public and policy attention on the issue and the NAP's evolution.
- An evaluation time-frame should be established (i.e. within 3 years, mid-term; end of 5 or 10 years), based on a clear baseline with specific targets to be achieved. The evaluation processes and reports undertaken by some countries (e.g. Bulgaria, India, Spain, among others) can provide examples to learn and draw from.
- National monitoring efforts could be aligned with the State Party's responsibility to report to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and other international bodies.

KEY PROCESS ISSUES IN DEVELOPING THE NAP

Participatory Consultations

- The process of developing the NAP should bring together the necessary actors, decision-makers and service providers from the various sectors, experts, women's groups and other civil society organizations, survivor advocates, youth and men's groups, among others. A broadly participatory and consultative process can build ownership of the NAP, and offers the opportunity to identify and build in the specific roles and commitments of these partners, thereby laying the groundwork for the NAP's effective implementation even before it is adopted.
- The consultative process should build in a political strategy whereby the key stakeholders are engaged so as to facilitate eventual Cabinet level approval of the NAP.

Governance and Administrative Structure: Issues of Decentralization

- In developing, implementing and monitoring NAPs, due attention should be paid to the national governance and administrative structure. Policies and laws, once adopted, may have more resonance and be better known at central levels of government, but dissemination, application and two-way coordination and coherence between central and decentralized levels may require particular mechanisms and measures.
 - What approach do the local and national governments take when addressing the issue of violence against women? Is there a disconnect? Are there synergies from the local to the national level and vice versa?
- Identifying legal or other mechanisms that can establish and institutionalize the NAP as a State policy for the longer-term can be particularly strategic (i.e. vis-à-vis changes in government).

Budgets

- What is the allocated budget for the NAP? What are the 'core' and priority elements that should be funded? The budget should ensure that minimal standards and priority areas for action are adequately covered.
- There should be sufficient and ongoing funding to implement and sustain the NAP's roll out. A range of sources may be considered, including governmental at central/provincial/district/municipal levels; public-private sector partnerships; the donor and the UN community. Legislative measures to secure funding can specify obligatory, annual budgetary appropriations at different administrative levels of government.
- Are budget negotiations underway during the process of NAP development (i.e. with each sector and each level of government)?

- What are strategic entry points and strategies to secure financial resources?
 - Actions to address violence against women and girls may be incorporated into other prominent policy and funding structures, in order to ensure that gender-based violence receives the appropriate level of political and financial backing. This can include mainstream poverty reduction and national development plans; health, education, and security sector reforms; or sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, maternal mortality and youth development plans.
- Budgets should provide expert nongovernmental organizations and women’s groups with direct funding. In many settings, they are the primary service providers and expertise who should form an integral part of the NAP and the costing of their services should be accounted for in the budgets.
- Gender-responsive budgeting can serve as a high-impact advocacy and practical tool for including violence against women in budgets, in tracking expenditures and in ensuring accountability.
- Have the intervention packages and components being proposed in the NAP been costed (e.g. for budget estimates regarding a minimal services package, for prevention efforts, etc.)?
- Carrying out costing exercises can serve to articulate the enormous costs of violence against women and girls, and the importance and benefits of investing in addressing it.
 - There are many direct and indirect costs related to violence against women that cuts across various sectors, and that can run in the billions of dollars annually to public budgets (ranging from female absenteeism and diminished productivity, health care costs, police and judiciary services, among others).
 - Undertaking a cost-benefit analysis can demonstrate and contrast the costs of inaction (to public budgets, to socio-economic development) by comparison to the savings that can stem from increased investments in prevention and response.

KEY RESOURCES FOR FORMULATING NAPs

- National Accountability Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls: 10 point checklist. The checklist was developed by the Ending Violence Against Women Section of UNIFEM, and is intended to assist policy-makers. See <http://www.endvawnow.org/?start-here-programming-essentials-me&menub=152&monitoring-and-national-accountability>.
- The UN Secretary-General's database on violence against women. The database includes official policies, National Action Plans, and relevant laws on violence against women. Good practices, with a particular focus on good practices in law; in service provision; and in prevention, are listed in the database. See <http://www.un.org/esa/vawdatabase>.
- UNIFEM's Global Virtual Knowledge Centre, which was developed by lead experts in the field, is a one-stop centre to support practitioners around the world in effective design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes to address gender based violence. See <http://www.endvawnow.org>.
- Secretary-General's Campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women", Framework for Action, 2008-2015 (March 2008): One of the national outcomes specifically speaks to NAPs and the requirement that each country either have a National Action Plan underway, implemented or resourced by 2015. See <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/>.
- For a comprehensive list of the Resolutions relating to violence against women, see
 - General Assembly - <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-work-ga.htm>
 - Security Council - <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-sc-work.htm>
 - Human Rights Council - <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-hrc.htm>
- Amnesty International's report, "Setting the Standard: International Good Practice to Inform an Australian National Plan of Action to Eliminate Violence Against Women" was presented to the Australian government and to other organizations (Amnesty International, 2008). See <http://www.amnesty.org.au/svaw/comments/14454/>.
- Time For Action: The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, 2009-2021 (the Plan of Action, March 2009). See http://www.facs.gov.au/sa/women/pubs/violence/np_time_for_action/national_plan/Documents/The_Plan.pdf. Other evidence-based resources and background documentation for the development of the policy are also available on-line.
- Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services (Council of Europe, 2007). See <http://www.coe.int/equality/>.

- Bridging Gaps: From Good Intentions to Good Cooperation (Women against Violence Europe, 2006). See http://www.wave-network.org/images/doku/homepage_bg_manual_fromgoodinterventionstogoodcooperation3.pdf
- Assistance for the Implementation of the ECOWAS Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons: Training Manual (UNODC, 2006). See http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/ecowas_training_manual_2006.pdf
- Model National Plan of Action Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC, 2008). See http://www.ecpat.net/EI/printout.asp?c=includes/languages/en/Global_npaModel.asp

Indicators

- Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on the indicators on violence against women. See <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc09/2009-13-GenderStats-E.pdf> .
- *Violence Against Women and Girls: A Compendium of Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators* (MEASURE Evaluation/USAID, 2008). See http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/publications?searchterm=Violence+Against+Women+and+Girls%3A+A+Compendium+of+Monitoring+and+Evaluation+Indicators+&type=&topic=&publication_title=on&sort=relevance&order=DESC&row_count=10&search=search .
- Promotion and Protection of All Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural, including the Right to Development: Indicators on Violence against Women and State Response (Report of The Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences, Yakin Ertürk, 2008). See <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rapporteur/annual.htm>.
- Women, Peace and Security – UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Indicators for Monitoring Resolution Implementation (United Nations Security Council, 2010). See http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2010/173&referer=/english/&Lang=E