

Preventing and eliminating violence against women

**United Nations system activities
on violence against women**

UPDATE
July 2007 to January 2008

This UPDATE complements the information contained in the *Inventory of United Nations system activities on violence against women*, July 2007, available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/Inventory.update.oct.2007.as%20posted.pdf>

Prepared by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, on the basis of inputs provided by United Nations entities, as part of the activities of the Task Force on violence against women of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality.

Department of Political Affairs (DPA)

The Department of Political Affairs joined UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict. DPA field missions were informed of the Department's commitment to UN Action's work, and requested to increase monitoring and reporting on sexual violence against women and girls.

Operational activities, including capacity building and training activities

On 25 November 2007, the United Nations Peace-building Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) Gender Team gave a 2-hour presentation on sexual and gender-based violence to police officers during a workshop on women's rights organized by the Mission's Human Rights Section, in cooperation with UNHCR and UNICEF. The aim of the presentation was to sensitize national police officers on gender-based violence. BONUCA's Civilian Police Section also conducted training for national gendarme officers on human rights issues and gender-based violence, focusing on their role in eliminating such violence in the Central African Republic.

As part of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) Gender Group, BONUCA contributed to the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) with a proposal focusing on sexual and gender-based violence. BONUCA will be part of a task force on gender-based violence in humanitarian interventions, which was put in place following a workshop, organized by UNFPA, in cooperation with UNICEF, the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and National Solidarity, on guidelines for gender-based interventions in humanitarian settings.

Awareness-raising and advocacy

BONUCA, in cooperation with UNIFEM, carried out sensitization efforts as part of the campaign "16 days of activism against gender violence", in November/December 2007. Radio Ndeke-Louka broadcast an interview conducted with BONUCA's Gender Affairs Officer on 24 November on the objectives and activities of the sensitization campaign. The radio station carried daily reports and interviews with women and men participants at the sensitization meetings, which were held in Bangui and in the three provinces where BONUCA has regional human rights offices (Bouar, Bossangoa and Bambari) to raise awareness among military personnel and civil society. One of the meetings was attended by the First Lady, Mrs. Monique Bozize. In total, more than 2000 persons attended these meetings. During the meetings, a sketch dealing with violence against women was performed, followed by a discussion on ways to reduce and eliminate gender-based violence in the Central African Republic. Banners, posters and T-shirts with sensitization messages were also used as part of the campaign.

The United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) liaised with other United Nations entities (OHCHR, UNFPA and UNIFEM) on issues relating to women's rights, including violence against women. The Mission also participated in various forums such as the sexual and gender-based violence-Network, chaired by OHCHR, Security Council Resolution 1325 Peace Support Working Group, chaired by UNFPA and the Embassy of Norway, as well as in information sharing and strategy discussions on way to advise and support national mechanisms to address violence against women and girls.

Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)

DPKO is a member of UN Against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

In the field, DPKO Gender Advisers are involved in advocacy, in ensuring United Nations leadership on the issue of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as well in strengthening national and regional efforts towards combating SGBV.

Policy development

Gender Advisers are making efforts to ensure that regular reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council highlight steps taken to combat SGBV. They also support the adoption and implementation of laws to address SGBV at national level. Working in partnership with United Nations Country Teams (UNCT), Gender Advisers are also supporting national partners to develop and adopt national action plans as well as build capacity of national actors to address sexual and gender-based violence.

Operational activities

Gender Advisers in peacekeeping missions serve as catalysts to support efforts to address gender-based violence within the work of mission components such as the UN Police (UNPOL), human rights, rule of law and public information, as an important part of their gender mainstreaming strategy. For example, they have partnered with UNPOL to highlight gender-based violence in training for National Police. Working with peacekeeping missions' public information units particularly radio stations, they have also supported national organizations to spearhead campaigns on SGBV. In West Africa, Gender Advisers from missions in Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Liberia (ONUCI, UNIOSIL and UNMIL) have attended a regional meeting to share best practices and lessons learnt for addressing SGBV.

Future activities

During the Fourth Annual Meeting of the DPKO Gender Team held in January 2008, gender-based violence was identified as a priority issue for action in the 2008 mandate. It was agreed that capacity within the missions and national level to respond to such should be reinforced through advocacy and coordination. It was also agreed that prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence should be prioritized within the Security Sector Reform processes.

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OHCA)

OCHA is a member of UN Against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Policy development

The Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/2007/643) of 28 October 2007 placed considerable focus on the problem of gender-based violence in conflict as well as highlighted ways for all actors to strengthen their actions based on their mandates. The report called on states to investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators. In the case of the armed forces and the police, this should include the commanders under whom they serve if the commanders failed to take measures to prevent the violations. The report also called on humanitarian actors to strengthen and better coordinate their work.

Operational activities including capacity-building and training activities

On behalf of the IASC Sub-working group on Gender, OCHA led a pilot workshop in Nairobi for seven country teams from the East African region to build their capacity to implement multi-sectoral gender-based violence programmes in humanitarian settings and to use the Guidelines for gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian settings and the Gender Handbook of the IASC.

OCHA supported the GenCap Standby capacity to deploy nine senior gender advisers to the offices of Humanitarian Coordinators to ensure strengthened coordination on programmes to address gender-based violence in conflict and displacement. OCHA participated in inter-agency efforts to develop a standard GBV incident reporting system. OCHA spearheaded efforts along with other members of UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict to pay special attention to the problem of gender-based violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as follow-up to the UN Action mission to Darfur, Sudan.

Awareness-raising and advocacy

The Emergency Relief Coordinator went on mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in September 2007 and placed considerable attention on the problem of gender-based violence. He followed this up with reports to the Security Council and external media coverage. He hosted the meeting of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and gender-based violence in December 2007 which further directed the United Nations system to support the field operations (MONUC and the UNCT) to accelerate and strengthen their actions to prevent gender-based violence and respond to survivors. Collective efforts also resulted in an improved mandate for MONUC to address gender-based violence.

Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)

Policy development/research

DAW prepared reports of the Secretary-General to the sixty-second session of the General Assembly on intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (A/62/201) and violence against women migrant workers (A/62/177); as well as reports of the Secretary-General to the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women on ending female genital mutilation (E/CN.6/2008/3) and forced marriage of the girl child (E/CN.6/2008/4).

In follow-up to General Assembly resolution 61/143, DAW, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE) and the United Nations Statistics Division, organized an expert group meeting on “Indicators to measure violence against women”, Geneva, Switzerland, October 2007. DAW and UNSD are supporting a joint dialogue of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Statistical Commission, on 28 February 2008, to discuss the outcomes and proposed indicators of the expert group meeting. DAW has initiated work for the development of a coordinated database on violence against women, as requested by the General Assembly (A/RES/61/143, para. 19).

Operational activities including capacity-building and training activities

DAW, in cooperation with ESCWA’s Centre for Women, convened a regional capacity building workshop on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women for judges and parliamentarians from 13 countries in Western Asia, in Amman, Jordan, in October 2007. The meeting focused on follow-up to the Secretary-General’s study on violence against women and General Assembly resolution 61/143, and on family law. DAW participated in a regional conference on legal reform on domestic violence in Sofia, Bulgaria, in February 2008.

Awareness-raising and advocacy

In February 2008, DAW will co-sponsor, together with the Permanent Missions of Canada and of Finland to the United Nations, the presentation of the book "Violence against Women: An International Perspective" which presents comparative results for nine of the countries which have implemented the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS). DAW has compiled information about recent activities of the entities of the United Nations system in follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 61/143 and 62/133, to complement the Inventory of United Nations system activities on violence against women, which was uploaded on the DAW website in July 2007. DAW has widely disseminated the Secretary-General’s study on violence against women, which is now available in book form in English, French and Spanish, and in mimeographed form in Arabic, Russian and Chinese. These versions are available online.

Future activities

In April 2008, DAW will convene an expert group meeting on good practices in legislation on violence against women.

Department of Public Information (DPI)

Awareness-raising and advocacy

In November 2007, to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, DPI's Development Section worked in collaboration with UNIFEM to produce an e-mail campaign with electronic cards which aimed to engage new audiences. The UN Information Centres mobilized civil society partners to focus on the issue, particularly around the International Day and the campaign '16 days of activism against gender violence'. Several Information Centres, including those in Asunción, Bogotá, Baku, Cairo, Lima, and Lusaka, developed special campaigns and radio and television programmes, and held press conferences, seminars and educational forums. Africa Renewal magazine issued an article on the realities faced by millions of African women, also noting grassroots work being undertaken to address violence against women; this article is also being offered for placement in regional newspapers. UNTV produced several stories that were offered to broadcasters through their series "UN in Action" and "21st Century", including features on honour killings in Turkey, domestic violence in Nepal and the prevalence of rape in Burundi. UN Radio produced various stories which included attention to violence against women, including in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Iraq. A dozen stories were featured on the high-traffic UN NewsCentre website, with headlines ranging from "*When women are empowered, all of society benefits – Migiro,*" to "*Sexual violence against women in DR Congo amounts to war crime: UN expert*". Several press releases highlighted the seriousness of the issue, including the visit of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Yakin Ertürk, to the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Outreach Division, through the New York Festival/UN DPI Awards, has been encouraging filmmakers to publicize this issue by granting awards to several films highlighting women's conditions globally.

Future activities

The Department is developing a communications strategy for broader audiences, as part of the Secretary-General's campaign to eliminate violence against women and girls, in collaboration with the UN Communications Group. DPI is working on the communication elements for the launch, such as a visual identity and slogan, as well as on a number of launch events. DPI will coordinate an inter-agency communications group and produce multimedia information materials. The network of United Nations Information Centres in over 60 countries will also be mobilized to work with country-level partners to adapt the global communications campaign in a manner best suited to their linguistic, cultural and country-specific needs.

Links to Information Products

UN e-cards

<http://www.unifem.org/campaigns/vaw/toolkit.php>

Africa Renewal Article

<http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol21no2/212-violence-against-women.html>

21st Century, show 14 - Nepal: Violence against women - September 2007

<http://www.un.org/av/unfamily/21stcentury.html>

21st Century, show 12 - Turkey: Honor Killings - October 2007

http://www.un.org/av/unfamily/21stcentury_12.html

21st Century, show 13 - Burundi: Struggling to be Free - November 2007

http://www.un.org/av/unfamily/21stcentury_13.html

News Centre stories on Violence against women

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/searchFull.asp>

Press Releases on Violence against women

<http://www.un.org/apps/pressreleases/search.asp>

UN Radio stories on violence against women

[26 November 2007 - UNIFEM "Say No to Violence Against Women" Campaign](#)

[02 November 2007 - Human Rights Expert Reports on Rampant Sexual Violence Against Women in the DRC](#)

[04 January 2008 - Violence Against Women in Iraq on the Rise](#)

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Policy development

The Women's Rights and Gender Unit established in 2006 continued its work related to legal analysis with respect to access to justice for victims of sexual violence. One Expert Group Meeting on 'Prosecution of rape and other forms of sexual violence' was held in September 2007, with the aim to finalize an OHCHR legal position paper on the subject. The position paper is expected to be launched in early 2008, together with a legal position paper on the inter-linkages between access to justice and the protection of women's economic and social rights.

In September 2007, OHCHR organized a seminar on women and torture, for United Nations and civil society representatives, with the aim of providing input for the thematic report of the Special Rapporteur on Torture, on strengthening the protection of women from torture (A/HRC/7/3), to be presented to Human Rights Council at its seventh session. The report is aimed at ensuring that the torture protection framework is applied in a gender-inclusive manner.

In September 2007, the Office ensured support in the organization of and participation in the discussion, at the sixth session of Human Rights Council, on gender integration, where an expert panel considered ways to ensure the integration of a gender perspective into the work of the Council. During its resumed sixth session in December 2007, the Council adopted a resolution on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system in which it decided to incorporate into its programme of work as a minimum an annual full-day meeting, to discuss the human rights of women. A first such meeting should take place in the first half of 2008, and include a discussion on violence against women, as mandated by the General Assembly.

The responsibility to provide support to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has now formally been transferred to the OHCHR. In addition to logistical and over-all support, discussions have been held with the Committee on the provision of analytical assistance on specific thematic issues, such as sexual violence, honour killings, domestic violence and the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325.

Research

OHCHR continued to commission and conduct research and analysis on access to justice for victims of sexual violence with the aim to assist the development of policy and advocacy strategies. Such work includes a study on laws that discriminate against women to be launched in 2008 and the elaboration, by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, of model provisions on domestic violence.

Operational activities including capacity building and training activities

OHCHR provided training for representatives from human rights organizations in the occupied Palestinian territories, on women's rights in general and violence against women in particular. OHCHR also issued grants to non-governmental organizations to undertake human rights activities: since July 2007 this has included a grant to fund a legal assistance project in Tajikistan for women subjected to domestic violence.

In December 2007, the OHCHR conducted a feasibility mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo to determine the most effective manner for contributing to ensuring accountability for crimes of sexual violence against women and the added value of its active participation in on-going or planned United Nations activities in this regard.

Awareness-raising and advocacy

The OHCHR in general and the High Commissioner for Human Rights in particular have continued to raise the issue of violence against women on various occasions, including in connection with the discussion, by the Security Council, of follow up to resolution 1325, in October 2007.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Policy development and research

The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice decided to hold, at its seventeenth session in 2008, a thematic discussion on those aspects of violence against women that pertain directly to the mandate of the Commission.

Among recent and upcoming publications are: Handbook on Female Offenders and the Management of Women in Prison (expected in June 2008); Handbook for Effective Police Responses to Violence Against Women (expected in June 2008); child-friendly version of the Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime (published in February 2008); Handbook for Female Prison Staff on Responding to the Specific Needs of Women Prisoners in Afghanistan (published in December 2007 in Dari; publication in English subject to availability of resources).

Operational activities including capacity-building and training activities

In Afghanistan, UNODC completed phase I of a project aimed at improving post-release opportunities for women and girl prisoners in Kabul with a focus on educational and vocational training to better equip them for release back into the community. Training was also carried out for prison staff on the special needs of preparing women and girls for release and several tools developed. During phase II, similar activities will be extended to the provinces.

Ongoing and planned UNODC projects on juvenile justice in Afghanistan, Burundi, Egypt, Haiti, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen pay particular attention to the situation of girls and to awareness raising and training on the special needs of girls. A global project on implementation of the Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime is ongoing and gives special consideration to the situation of girl victims and witnesses of crime.

In Rajasthan, India, UNODC contributed to an initiative together with MIT's Poverty Action Lab, to train police officers to respond effectively to violence against women. The programme aimed at improving public perception and trust of the community as well as overall quality, efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of over 2000 police personnel posted in police stations, including four women police stations.

As part of a programme to assist the process of prison reform in Southern Sudan, UNODC has developed, together with UNMIS, a training programme to build leadership capacity within the prison service and address the circumstances of prisoners with special needs. As part of this initiative, training on the special needs of women prisoners will be held, using the forthcoming UNODC Handbook on Female Offenders and the Management of Women in Prison.

Awareness-raising and advocacy

An awareness-raising pamphlet for women prisoners in Afghanistan using drawings and cartoons is being published in cooperation with UNIFEM. The pamphlet aims to inform women in prison about their rights and takes into account newly approved regulations of penitentiary law.

UNODC country projects include components of awareness-raising and advocacy on violence against women.

Future activities

A 30-month project “Building capacity of law enforcement and justice sectors to prevent and respond to domestic violence in Vietnam” will start in July 2008. The project aims at increasing the capacity of law enforcement and justice sector officers to deal with cases of domestic violence, and strengthen legal support for victims. The project activities are partly funded through the UN Joint Programme on Gender Equality.

The Southern African region has been identified for pilot testing of the first training activities of the Handbook for Effective Police Responses to Violence Against Women.

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

Policy development and research

ECE's work on violence against women focuses on the improvement of survey methodology and the development of common indicators and survey instruments for measuring violence against women. The work is undertaken by a Task Force that operates under the framework of the Conference of European Statisticians.

The Task Force prepared an assessment of existing surveys and methodology on measuring violence. In 2007 the Task Force hosted the "*Expert Group Meeting on Indicators to Measure Violence Against Women*" organized jointly with the UN Division for Advancement of Women, the UN Statistical Division and in collaboration with other UN Regional commissions. This Expert Group Meeting convened with the objective to commence work on a global list of indicators.

During 2006-2007, ECE completed the following:

- Inventory of surveys undertaken in the region to measure violence against women
- Comparative analysis of 25 National Surveys carried out by 17 Member countries¹, which highlighted the differences and commonalities of the methodology used to measure violence against women. A common basis from where it would be possible to develop standard methodology was also identified.
- Eight indicators were identified for sexual, physical and intimate partner violence, and harmful practices while other areas were identified for the development of new indicators. These include sexual harassment, killing of women by intimate partners, psychological and economic intimate partner violence.
- Preparatory work for establishing a website on the measurement of gender-based violence through population-based surveys.

Future activities

ECE plans to continue its work toward the development of standard indicators and survey methodology. This will be done through expert group meetings and national workshops.

More work is also planned to inform a broad range of interested users about definitions and methods to measure gender-based violence through surveys and to disseminate analytical products and available statistical data.

ECE plans to launch a website on the measurement of gender-based violence with statistical data from 11 countries presented in a unifying framework, facilitating access to national survey data that are not widely available in the international context.

¹ <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2006.09.gender.htm>

Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Policy framework

ECLAC's mandate and policy framework in the area of violence against women has been further strengthened by the recommendations of the Quito Consensus, adopted by the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (August 2007).

Policy development/research

In November 2007, ECLAC published the regional report on violence against women. The Spanish version was launched at simultaneous interagency press conferences in Santiago and New York, on 26 November 2007, under the title “!Ni una más! El derecho a vivir una vida libre de violencia en América Latina y el Caribe”. The English version will be launched under the title “No more! The right of women to live a life free of violence in Latin America and the Caribbean.”

In December 2007, ECLAC published a report on the follow-up to Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals, which included a chapter on violence against women and demonstrated the importance of this issue in reaching the MDGs.

Based on a mandate received in the Quito Consensus, ECLAC has initiated the development of an observatory on gender parity. Violence against women will be one of the three core indicators that will be followed in every country of Latin America and the Caribbean (together with political participation and unpaid work of women). One main activity will be the provision of technical assistance to improve the quality of measurement and the collection of national data on all forms of violence against women. In addition to external funding that is being sought, INSTRAW, UNIFEM and UNFPA are collaborating with ECLAC in this initiative.

Future activities

Following approval by the General Assembly for funding through the 6th tranche of the United Nations Development Account in 2008-2009, ECLAC will coordinate the implementation of the project "Enhancing capacities to eradicate violence against women", to be executed in collaboration with the other four regional commissions. Activities will include: collection of data, assessment of existing knowledge, dissemination of information through an interregional web portal, strengthening of the collaboration between users and producers of information, the development of comparable methodology, preparation of regional and national publications and training materials.

Interagency activities at regional level in support of the Secretary-General's campaign to eliminate violence against women and girls through 2015 will be coordinated at the forty-first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Bogota, Colombia, on 24-25 April 2008.

Economic Commission and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Policy development/research

In follow-up to ESCAP's April 2007 expert group meeting on regional strategies for implementing the recommendations from the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women, 2 studies documenting harmful traditional and cultural practices as forms of violence against women in South Asia and the Pacific have been commissioned for completion in the first quarter of 2008. A handbook based on the regional expert group discussion and recommendations on violence against women is being prepared for dissemination to a wider audience in the region.

In July 2007, ESCAP held an expert group meeting for senior law-making officials and national machineries for women to review the concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and integration of the Convention in domestic law. The meeting focused, as one major issue, on strategies for policy reform in the area of violence against women, including on such issues as recognition of marital rape, mechanisms to enforce existing laws - particularly on domestic violence, and personal or religious law that condones violence against women.

As part of its project to build the capacity of the Pacific Islands to adopt and implement the Stockholm Agenda for Action and the Yokohama Commitments to Combat Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth, a Regional Stakeholders' Consultation and Planning Workshop for government officials and NGOs based on situational analysis studies on the commercial sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse in the Pacific also addressed violence and abuse of girls and adolescents. The meeting, on 19-21 November 2007 in Suva, Fiji, was co-organized with ECPAT International and Save the Children Fiji.

Future activities

ESCAP, along with other regional commissions, will implement the project "Enhancing capacities to eradicate violence against women", funded through the Development Account. Activities in the region for 2008-2009 include preparation of three studies for the Pacific, South East Asia, and South Asia subregions to: inform a regional workshop of national women's machineries, women's organizations, gender and development institutes, and statistics offices and representatives; serve as pilot studies; and initiate a partnership and capacity-building of national women's machineries and statistics offices on the use of indicators for data collection and policy responses to violence against women by Member States. The regional workshop will (i) review current data and surveys on violence against women in the region to assess data availability and collection, sources of information, and obstacles and gaps; (ii) review violence against women indicators and their use for documentation and data collection; and (iii) consider the use and adoption of the proposed set of core indicators on violence against women at national level, using the global set of violence against women indicators as a starting point.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Policy development/research

The Third Session of the Committee on Women of ESCWA was convened in Abu Dhabi, 14- 5 March 2007 and focused on the theme of women and armed conflict in the Arab region, including multiple manifestations of violence against women.

ESCWA convened an expert group meeting in March 2007 on the impact of armed conflict on women, and the advancement of women living under conflict conditions. Topics included gender-based violence during armed conflict and other manifestations of violence against women under conflict conditions.

ESCWA contributed to the Secretary-General's report on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (E/CN.6/2008/3) and published *Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women 2000-2006*, which analyses the close links between increased poverty and social burdens and increased domestic violence against women. Also in 2007, ESCWA published the *Report on Women in the Arab region: Achievements, Obstacles and Prospects for Advancement*, which reviewed the status of Arab women and their achievements in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, The Arab Plan of Action and the Beirut Declaration, a five year plan which includes women's rights and violence against women among its five priority areas.

Operational activities including capacity-building and training activities

ESCWA undertook two advisory missions in 2007 to strengthen capacity for the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including legal reform and application of existing law in line with the Convention, as a pre-requisite for eradicating violence against women in the region. In October 2007, ESCWA also held a regional capacity-building workshop on the Convention, for judges and parliamentarians, in collaboration with DAW, which focused on violence against women.

Awareness-raising and advocacy

The ESCWA Centre for Women devoted the first issue of its newsletter to the subject of women and armed conflict. The newsletter examined gender-based violence against women in conflict settings in the Arab world. The March 2007 issue was devoted to the subject of violence against women in the ESCWA region and was distributed on International Women's Day 2007 as part of the global effort to call attention to this important issue.

Future activities

In 2008 – 2009, ESCWA will publish *Guidelines on the Protection of the Rights of Women in the ESCWA Region through the Proper Use of UN Resolutions and International Protocols on War and Armed Conflict*, which will focus on women's security of person and gender-based violence as a result of war and armed conflict.

The ESCWA Centre for Women, along with other regional commissions, will implement the project "Enhancing capacities to eradicate violence against women", funded through the Development Account.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP chairs the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Policy development/research

Policy influence has been a major component of UNDP's assistance in supporting governments to address gender-based violence in Mozambique, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Mexico, Zimbabwe, and Maldives. In Cambodia, for example UNDP's policy advocacy and support for the development of monitoring indicators on gender equality has resulted in the adoption by the Cambodian government of four Monitoring Indicators on gender equality, one of which relates to domestic violence. In Rwanda, UNDP's support to women parliamentarians has contributed to the drafting of a Bill to criminalize gender-based violence which has been submitted to the Parliament for approval.

UNDP supports action research for policy development, the collection of data disaggregated by sex and the development of databases on gender issues.

With UNDP's support, policy debates and dialogues backed by research on women's security and citizenship in Lebanon, Egypt, Syrian Arab Republic, Morocco, and Bahrain were held to promote women's human rights and draw attention to violence against women. Similarly, research carried out on domestic violence with UNDP support has contributed to policy development and promotion of women's human rights in Mexico, Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, Jamaica, Croatia, and Belarus. For example, in Equatorial Guinea, the findings and the recommendations of the study on violence against women and children have been integrated in the draft bill on family law. In Jamaica, the findings of a research on gender-based violence were fed into the development of a national action plan, including the identification of school based initiatives and the role of the family to address gender-based violence. In Belarus, the findings of an in-depth gender analysis of the situation of commercial sex workers helped to integrate issues related to human rights of commercial sex workers including prevention of violence against them into an on-going project.

Operational activities including capacity-building and training activities

UNDP supports the development of training modules for policy makers, law enforcement agencies and communities aimed at addressing violence against women, and contributes to capacity development at national and local levels. UNDP supports the provision of free legal service, counseling, mediation and rehabilitation, as well as micro-enterprise activities for survivors of gender-based violence.

In Honduras, a violence prevention programme was signed between the Instituto Luis Bogran, the Ministry of Education and UNDP for training teachers, parents and students to become change agents in preventing violence. In Samoa, a Human Rights Small Grants Scheme has contributed greatly to increasing the knowledge of community men and women on protection and promotion of human rights especially prevention of domestic violence against women and children. In Nicaragua, a pilot project on domestic and sexual violence is being implemented in two municipalities in partnership with the National Police. In Sudan, UNDP has a large Rule of Law Programme which includes a component on addressing sexual and gender-based violence. The Programme has activities to advocate for the rights of women, advise the Government on how to reform

its laws and put in place policies to meet international standards. In Afghanistan, UNDP is supporting the implementation of a project to strengthen the Police Force's family violence unit in Kabul. The project will be expanded to cover the 5 regional provinces.

Awareness-raising and advocacy

UNDP advocates for the elimination of violence against women and raises awareness by promoting multi-media national and local campaigns, including the "16 days of activism against gender violence" and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November).

Future activities

UNDP's new Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011 provides an operational framework for its country offices to address gender-based violence across its four focus areas, which are: poverty reduction, democratic governance, energy and environment and crisis prevention and recovery. An eight-point agenda for women's empowerment and gender equality in crisis prevention and recovery has been developed and guides the work of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. The eight-point agenda highlights ending personal and institutional sexual and gender-based violence as a critical element in achieving gender equality. A data-base of good practices on how to reduce gender-based violence in crisis and non-crisis countries is to be developed to support country level programming.

All the Regional Bureaus will continue to implement initiatives to reduce gender-based violence. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific is working with UNFPA and UNIFEM to implement a joint Programme to address gender-based violence in the Asia region. The Programme has a specific focus on engaging men and boys as partners in prevention, and will make use of a growing set of good practices in this area.

Through the MDG Achievement Fund, UNDP is administering funds for inter-agency collaboration on reducing gender-based violence in Bangladesh, Colombia, Morocco and Vietnam. These multi-year projects have received substantial funds and the results are expected to demonstrate what can be achieved through a sustained and integrated approach to gender-based violence.

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

Policy development

UNIFEM, in partnership with national counterparts, ministries, civil society and UN sister agencies, provided support to introduce and strengthen legislation and policies against gender-based violence, including the adoption of laws against domestic and sexual violence, rape and family law provisions in, for instance, Cameroon, Colombia, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine, Vietnam and Zimbabwe and the development of national strategies and plans in Albania, Algeria, Ecuador, Guyana, Kazakhstan and Slovakia. In Bolivia (Municipality of Cochabamba) and Ecuador, UNIFEM supported advocacy for increased allocations for services for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, resulting in the Government of Ecuador committing \$2 million for implementation of the national plan of action.

Research

UNIFEM supported initiatives for better data collection and national statistical monitoring on gender-based violence, including in Afghanistan, Algeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Mexico, Morocco, Senegal, and Venezuela. In Afghanistan, UNIFEM supported the development of a database to collect and track service-based data to monitor the 'Strategic Framework for Eliminating Violence against Women'. Under the UNIFEM-supported Safe Cities Programme in the Southern Cone of Latin America, a protocol is under development to guide the Urban Municipal Guard in Rosario, Argentina, in responding to gender-based violence, which is stimulating policy reforms in Santa Clara, Chile, and lessons are being shared with local authorities in Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay.

Operational activities, including capacity building and training

UNIFEM supported the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) and Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) to establish a gender working group in the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Investigation section. In China, UNIFEM support to the Xuzhou Domestic Violence Shelter is being considered for nation-wide scale-up by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. In Grenada, St. Lucia and Trinidad & Tobago, UNIFEM is supporting implementation of a court-based batterer intervention programme. In Rwanda, over 2,000 defence force members and local leaders have been trained and support provided to the national police in drafting training manuals for investigating sexual and gender-based violence. In 2007, UNIFEM launched a six-country programme designed to build community capacity to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and to build peace in post-conflict countries in Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor Leste and Uganda.

Awareness-raising and advocacy

In partnership with Gender Links, UNIFEM in its capacity as Chair of the Southern African Gender and Human Rights Advisory Group, promoted the development of score-cards to measure progress in ending violence against women in the context of the SADCC Gender and Development Protocol. UNIFEM supported a regional radio network (ALER) to train community radio staff in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, working among indigenous communities. In Southeast Asia and the Pacific, as elsewhere, UNIFEM, as part of joint UN efforts, supported campaign efforts on ending violence against women.

The UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador launched a global internet-based campaign (www.sayNOtoviolence.org) in consultation with UN sister agencies, NGOs and private sector. UNIFEM is a founding member of and hosts the Secretariat for the UN Action to End Sexual Violence in Conflict Situations.

The UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

In line with enhancing the effectiveness of the UN Trust Fund (UNTF) to end violence against women, established by GA Resolution 50/166 (1995), UNIFEM - in its role as Administrator - supports the roll out of strategic directions agreed by the inter-agency Programme Appraisal Committee, which in 2007 included up to 21 UN organizations at the global and decentralized levels. A targeted UN Trust Fund evaluation strategy has been developed in order to strengthen the Trust Fund's role in generating and contributing to the global knowledge base on effective approaches for upscaling responses.

In November 2007, the UNTF awarded nearly \$5 million to 29 initiatives in 36 countries in support of effective implementation of national laws, policies and plans of action on ending violence against women, as well as to cutting-edge initiatives addressing the inter-linkages between violence against women and HIV/AIDS. In 2007, Member States, private-sector and other donors increased their contributions to the UNTF, resulting in more than a tenfold increase over the past four years. However, the demand for support continues to far outstrip its resource base, with more than \$105 million in requests received in 2007.

Donors to the Trust Fund in 2007 include the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States of America, and UNIFEM national committees in Iceland, Switzerland and the United States. In addition, the Trust Fund has benefited from partnerships with the private sector. With the support of Johnson & Johnson, a special window on the interlinkage between violence against women and HIV/AIDS was opened in 2005, and a knowledge cohort of select grantees was set up in 2007. In addition, there have been other modest contributions from private-sector partners such as TAG Heuer, Omega and the London-based advertising agency Leo Burnett. Contributors in 2007 also included non-profit organizations Zonta International and the Transition Network as well as many individual donors who contributed on the occasion of the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the UN Trust Fund.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

Policy development

UNRWA adopted a Policy on Gender Equality, in June 2007.

Operational activities, including capacity building and training

UNRWA provided legal aid and counseling through Women Programme Centres.

Awareness raising and advocacy

UNRWA undertook awareness-raising on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including gender-based violence, for refugee community members through Women Programme Centres. UNRWA's Gaza Field Office undertook a gender equality initiative on domestic violence, including identifying prevention and protection measures through fostering understanding and discussion, enhancing the quality of psychosocial support services, developing a hotline and creating a radio station for and by women

Future activities

UNRWA will develop guidelines and a referral system for victims of gender-based violence encountered at UNRWA facilities, specifically health clinics. It will also develop a Policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

UNRWA will develop tools and guidelines on gender-sensitive emergency response, including prevention of gender-based violence and sexual abuse; and deliver training on gender issues in emergency to emergency staff.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Policy development

As a follow up to the Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children, in December 2007, UNICEF supported the development of a new publication on violence against girls. The publication, *From Invisible to Indivisible*, focuses on violence against girls and highlights the recommendations of the Study on Violence against Children and the Secretary-General's study on violence against women.

At the global level, UNICEF contributed extensively to the work of the General Assembly on a comprehensive policy and strategy for victims of abuse and exploitation by United Nations staff and partners. The policy, which was adopted by the General Assembly in resolution A/RES/62/214 in December 2007, explicitly notes the vulnerabilities of women and girls and seeks remedy for harm done to them.

UNICEF country offices continued to support the development of legislation pertinent to violence against women and girls, including on trafficking, domestic violence and sexual offences. UNICEF also continued to work with the Inter-Parliamentary Union to strengthen legislative responses to violence against women and children.

UNICEF continued to support the follow-up to Stockholm/Yokohama commitments on commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Awareness-raising and advocacy

UNICEF has played a major role in the new UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict initiative, as Co-Chair of the advocacy working group. Under the auspices of UN Action, UNICEF, together with the women's rights NGO V-Day is leading a global campaign against sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Campaign, *Stop raping our Greatest Resource: Power to the Women and Girls of DRC* was launched in Bukavu, DRC, in November 2007 and is designed to raise awareness, funds and political commitment to end violence against women and girls in DRC.

Future activities

UNICEF's future plans regarding violence against women continue to include: implementation of recommendations in the Secretary-General's study on violence against children, ensuring attention to violence against girls; expanding work with boys to prevent gender-based violence through the coaching boys into men programme; enhanced programming to prevent sexual violence and meet the needs of survivors of sexual violence; continued work at the community level on abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting and early marriage; and continued participation in UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Policy development/research

In 2007, UNFPA developed a draft corporate strategy on gender-based violence to identify priority areas of focus for investing its resources strategically at country, regional and global levels, based on its comparative advantages and experience. The draft strategy also lays out the organization's capacity development initiatives, resources and partnerships for an effective approach to addressing gender-based violence.

UNFPA organized a meeting in Addis Ababa on addressing female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in August 2007 for more than 70 participants from UN entities, governments, faith-based organizations, NGOs, law enforcement agencies, donors and research institutions. A resulting roadmap for eliminating FGM/C within a generation is expected to be published and discussions for its implementation are expected to be held in 2008. UNFPA and UNICEF launched, at the end of 2007, a joint Trust Fund that aims at reducing FGM/C by 40 per cent in 17 countries by 2015.

In December 2007, UNFPA published *A Holistic Approach to the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*. This document describes the holistic approach utilized by UNFPA - such legal and policy reform, national capacity building and working at the community level - in its FGM/C abandonment programmes, and gives a brief sampling of the organization's country level experiences.

In December 2007, UNFPA co-hosted the Africa Regional Forum on strengthening partnerships with faith-based organizations (FBOs) for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and violence against women, with the World Conference of the Religions for Peace, in Durban, South Africa. Preparations for the upcoming Asia Regional FBO Forum in April-May 2008, and the Global FBO Forum in October 2008 are under way.

In 2007, UNFPA, in collaboration with the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), developed model for costing violence against women, to be used for Bangladesh, Uganda, and Morocco. Data collection has commenced and workshops are planned for 2008.

UNFPA commissioned a follow up volume to its 2006 publication *Programming to Address Violence Against Women: Ten Case Studies*. The volume will contain 8 new case studies, and will be published in 2008.

Operational activities including capacity-building and training activities

Gender-based violence constitutes an integral part of UNFPA's mandated work in gender equality, women's empowerment and reproductive health and rights. As such, UNFPA is continually working in collaboration with governments, other UN agencies, donors and civil society on a number of fronts to address gender-based violence. These include policy and legal reforms; data collection and analysis; health, legal and other support services for survivors; outreach work with men on prevention; training of uniformed personnel, health workers and law enforcement; sensitization of populations at large; and addressing sexual violence in emergency and post-emergency humanitarian responses.

As the co-conveners of IANWGE's Task Force on violence against women, UNFPA and UNDAW drafted a proposal for joint programming on violence against women in 10 pilot countries. The planning and assessment phase of the initiative is underway in 8 of the 10 pilot countries.

As a member of UN Action, UNFPA co-organized inter-agency trainings on violence against women for coordinators in humanitarian settings in 2007, and plans to implement similar intensive courses in 2008; provided strategic assistance to the UNCT in Darfur (Sudan) and DRC in 2007; and is planning undertake missions and provide support to Haiti, Burundi, Chad and Central African Republic in 2008. UNFPA hosted a workshop in Tunisia during the summer of 2007, on the topic of displaced women in conflict and post-conflict situations. Recommendations from the workshop focused on ways to engage in efforts to accelerate implementation of Security Council 1325.

United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat)

Policy development/research

In October 2007, the International Conference on the State of Safety in World Cities took place in Monterrey, Mexico. The Conference developed an international framework to support cities in their efforts to address issues of violence and crime, including violence against women; outlined strategies and approaches to address violence against women; and built partnerships between United Nations, Governments, Local authorities, Civil society and women's organizations and regional bodies to address urban crime and violence.

UN-Habitat has created a database of over 200 institutions, local authorities and grassroots initiatives covering women's safety tools. It will create a global network on safety including violence against women.

Awareness raising and advocacy

UN Habitat launched awards and competitions on "Safety and Security for Women and Girls in Cities" for Latin American and the Caribbean for 2007/2008 in November 2007.

Future activities

As part of its work on women's safety audits, UN-Habitat will undertake a global comparison to identify what works in what contexts, and what are the challenges internationally in the use of women's safety audits as a tool to prevent violence against women, and to empower and increase women's involvement in governance. This research will also analyze the outcomes from the use of women's safety audits both in terms of design changes and the strengthening of women's involvement in local planning and governance.

In February 2008, UN-Habitat will issue a publication "Using Planning to Combat Violence Against Women", containing a global analysis with regional case studies/examples. It will hold an expert group meeting on safety and security in Asia and Pacific, in Bangkok, Thailand, from 27-29 February 2008. The meeting will bring together local authorities and civil society organizations, and will aim to raise awareness on safety and security issues in the Asia and Pacific region.

UN-Habitat will undertake training of trainers, using its women's safety audit tool, in Latin America and the Caribbean, in the first part of 2008. The objectives of the training of trainers are: to build the capacities of institutions in national and local government to design policies and strategies to address issues of violence against women by undertaking a women safety audit.

United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW)

Research

INSTRAW prepared the Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit, and towards this end, undertook extensive research into the current response of security sector actors to gender-based crimes such as violence against women, evaluation of that response, and the development of recommendations based on identified gaps in research and training.

Operational activities including capacity-building and training activities

In August 2007, INSTRAW in collaboration with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), hosted an expert workshop on gender and security sector reform, which brought together a number of experts in different areas of the security sector (police, military, border management, private security companies, etc.) to discuss issues such as gender training, gender mainstreaming, and an appropriate response to the specific insecurities faced by women, including physical and sexual violence.

The workshop was part of the development of the *Gender and Security Reform Toolkit*, a comprehensive capacity-building tool that aims to improve the integration of gender issues in specific security sectors (police, justice, penal system, etc.), and the capacity of security personnel to better respond to such human rights abuses as violence against women. The toolkit includes 12 tools and corresponding practice notes on gender and police reform, gender and border management, gender and justice reform, and gender training for security personnel, among other topics.

Awareness-raising and advocacy

INSTRAW will launch the Gender and SSR Toolkit on 3 March 2008, during the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women. It will carry out advocacy efforts targeting Member States and other relevant stakeholders for its use in security sector reform processes.

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

Policy development/research

In the research programme for 2005-2009, violence against women is being addressed under the Gender and Development Programme. The Programme has recently launched an edited volume series, co-published with Routledge, the second of which is *Gendered Peace: Women's Struggles for Post-War Justice and Reconciliation*, edited by Donna Pankhurst, 2008. This volume makes a contribution to the literature on women, conflict and peace-building. Its particular focus is on the period after a peace accord, or some other official ending of a conflict, often denoted as "post-conflict" or "post-war".

United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)

Operational activities

In Costa Rica, UNICRI carried out specialized training for 35 law-enforcement professionals, including judges, prosecutors, judicial police and migration officials, between July and August 2007 at the Judicial School of San José, Costa Rica. It provided training for Hotline and Information Call Centers operators on the issue commercial sexual exploitation of children; the extension of the Information System for specialized public prosecutor offices to the Prosecutor's Office of Liberia and Jacó and related training of personnel. It also undertook the production and distribution of information material for child sex crime victims.

Future activities

In February 2008 UNICRI is starting the implementation of a programme on trafficking of women and adolescents from Nigeria to Italy (envisaged duration: 24 months). The project is designed to implement the good practices that resulted from a pilot phase which ended in 2004. It includes capacity building and training in Nigeria, together with awareness raising and women's empowerment activities. Action-oriented research aimed at assessing and disseminating good practices of assistance to Nigerian adolescents and young women victims of trafficking in Italy will also be carried out.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

Policy development

In August 2007, UNAIDS convened a technical consultation on social change communication aimed, among other things, at examining the role of social change communication in HIV prevention, with a specific focus on tackling the drivers of the epidemic. Resulting follow up actions will include country-level campaigns on zero-tolerance for gender-based violence as a social norm.

The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS has actively provided technical and financial support to regional coalitions of women leaders. The Regional Coalition of First Ladies and Women Leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean Coalition of Women Leaders are working with networks of women living with HIV in putting forward action plans to address gender-based violence.

Operational activities including capacity-building and training activities

In collaboration with leading experts at the London School of Tropical Medicine, UNAIDS together with WHO and the Global coalition on women and AIDS developed costing estimates for integrating programmes that address violence against women into national AIDS programmes. As a result of this work, interventions on violence against women that can be easily added to existing national AIDS programmes were included in the 2007 UNAIDS “Financial Resources Required to Achieve Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support”.

Future activities

In April 2008, UNAIDS will convene regional implementers and partners on HIV prevention to re-assess why young women and girls in HIV hyper-endemic countries of southern Africa are so vulnerable to HIV infection. The consultation will lead to an improved and better coordinated research agenda on HIV prevention for young women and girls in the region and a clear follow-up and support plan to better address vulnerability of young women and girls in the eight hyper-endemic countries of southern Africa.

Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)

Policy development/research

As part of the United Nations system-wide work programme on scaling-up HIV/AIDS services for populations of humanitarian concern, FAO carried out research on HIV AND AIDS, gender inequality, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and equal property rights in Western Kenya (Busia District).

FAO drafted a fact sheet on agriculture, food security and gender-based violence. This document analyzes the main causes of vulnerability of the rural population and proposes some actions to prevent and reduce gender-based violence, with special attention to the human rights of women and youth.

Operational activities including capacity-building and training activities

In follow-up to Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, FAO integrated gender analysis in emergency and rehabilitation programmes and addressed the specific needs of the socio-economic groups most at risk of violence.

FAO closely collaborated with the IASC Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance in mainstreaming a gender perspective in humanitarian settings and raising awareness on gender issues of humanitarian officers and policy and decision-makers.

Awareness raising and advocacy

FAO collaborated with the members of the IASC Task Force in the dissemination of "Guidelines for gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian settings: focusing on prevention of and response to sexual violence in emergencies" and the handbook "Women, girls, boys and men: different needs - equal opportunities", which also includes some specific actions to address gender-based violence.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Policy framework

In its new Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013, UNESCO accords priority to gender equality in all its fields of competence supported by a dual approach, gender specific programming and gender mainstreaming, in Member States and within the Organization (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001499/149999e.pdf>).

Policy development/research

UNESCO has signed the Interagency Statement on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation (February 2008) and will develop a multi-sectoral initiative to act upon the commitments made.

Operational activities including capacity-building and training activities

In the area of social and human sciences, UNESCO is implementing projects which analyze the socio-cultural institutions, laws, norms, and practices that inhibit gender equality, such as a series of studies which examine the family laws in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

UNESCO is working on a campaign to fight human trafficking in Africa.

UNESCO is also implementing a project entitled “Gender, Culture, HIV and AIDS” which seeks to demonstrate that the HIV and AIDS pandemic is both fuelling and being fuelled by inequalities based on gender, race, ethnicity, class and age. A publication will be released in 2008 tentatively entitled “*The Fourth Wave: an assault on women; Gender, Culture and HIV and AIDS in the 21st Century*”.

Awareness-raising and advocacy

UNESCO is organizing awareness-raising activities on the elimination of all forms of violence against women, such as international conferences on the occasion of International Women’s Day (“Gender Equality – Make it your Business” in 2008) and other conferences on relevant topics.

UNESCO’s flagship initiative of community multimedia centers (CMC) provides access to information and communication resources in the areas of women’s rights and development, and offers an opportunity for poor and marginalized women to use ICTs and media for their own development. UNESCO has over 130 CMCs in more than 25 countries.

World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO has continued its work on violence against women and girls, with a focus on intimate partner violence, sexual violence and female genital mutilation (FGM).

Policy development

WHO held an expert meeting on *Primary prevention of intimate partner violence and sexual violence* on 2-3 May in Geneva. The meeting report and a background paper summarizing the evidence is available in the WHO website.

WHO coordinated the preparation of the Inter-agency statement on the elimination of female genital mutilation (FGM) which will be launched and disseminated at the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women. A consultation was held to develop the *WHO ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies*. This is now available in English and French, and translation into Arabic is under way.

Research

WHO is continuing to do analysis from the database of the WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women. Results of research on the obstetric complications of female genital mutilation from 6 African countries were published, and other research is ongoing.

Operational activities including capacity-building and training activities

WHO has continued to provide technical support to Member States on request, including on data collection and violence against women surveys, health sector response, and primary prevention. WHO co-chairs the IASC Subworking group on gender and humanitarian action and is actively involved, including as members of UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, in responding to sexual and gender-based violence in emergencies.

Awareness raising and advocacy

Within the framework of violence prevention, WHO emphasizes the role of public health in the prevention and response to violence against women. WHO is actively advocating against the medicalization of female genital mutilation.

Future activities

WHO will continue to place high priority on prevention, and in 2008, will develop a framework and programmatic guidance for countries on primary prevention of intimate partner and sexual violence, building on the review and an expert consultation carried out in 2007.

WHO will continue to disseminate the ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies.

In regard to research, WHO will give priority to the analysis of risk and protective factors for intimate partner violence from the WHO Multi-country Study database. A study is planned on assessing and responding to violence during pregnancy in 3 countries.

On behalf of UN Action, WHO will convene a meeting to develop a research agenda and consolidate lessons learned in responding to sexual and other forms of gender-based violence in conflict.

WHO will conduct research on community interventions, decision making and FGM and sexuality.

Among its operational activities, WHO will continue to provide technical support to Member States on request, including on data collection and violence against women surveys, health sector response, and primary prevention. It will also provide support for responding to sexual and gender-based violence in emergencies, including as part of interagency efforts such as the IASC Subworking group on gender and UN Action. Regional training courses on violence against women research are in preparation.

World Bank

Research

Learning for Equality, Access and Peace Programme (LEAP): The LEAP programme is part of the larger Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) that is currently being implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa. The overall aim of the LEAP programme is to strengthen the impact of MDRP-financed programmes from a gender perspective. Specifically, the programme will undertake a study of the underlying causes of violence against women in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and will recommend follow-up actions. The study will also include a mapping of national and international organizations that are currently implementing– or have implemented – programmes addressing gender-based violence. MDRP partners include governments, other multilateral development banks, civil society groups and United Nations entities.

Measuring Empowerment in Four Countries: The Measuring Empowerment in Four Countries programme is piloting a mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative) approach to measuring empowerment in different contexts, be they project, programme or policy contexts. The study is being implemented in Ghana, Ethiopia, Jamaica, and Bangladesh. In Ghana and Ethiopia, the focus is on empowerment in the context of decentralization and social accountability; in Jamaica, the context is youth-police relations; and, in Bangladesh the work focuses on a range of social assistance programmes (including capacity building and various kinds of targeted transfers). The study places particular attention on the empowerment of women, and the questionnaire that is administered to women only includes questions on domestic violence and violence against women outside of the home. The programme has been carried out mainly by two UK firms, in conjunction with local partners. In Bangladesh, the partner was the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Future activities

Protection from gender-based violence in Côte d'Ivoire: With funding from the World Bank's Post-Conflict Fund, the project on protection from gender-based violence will address the prevention and treatment of sexual violence in Côte d'Ivoire. Key activities will include the creation of a referral network for NGOs, training of health providers in the use of PEP kits to aid victims of sexual assault, and strengthening the national committee to prevent violence against women and children. This project will be implemented in coordination with the International Rescue Committee and local organizations.

Health Sector Development Project: Most HIV/AIDS projects in the Africa region incorporate anti-violence initiatives, recognizing that sexual violence is a risk factor for HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies. The Health Sector Development Project in Congo/Brazzaville, like previous and ongoing health projects, will work with women's groups and the health sector to improve the quality of services and responses to violence against women.

UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN ACTION)

Background

UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action) was launched in 2007 to intensify and better coordinate the UN system's response to sexual violence during and after conflict. It unites the work of 12 UN system entities (DPA, DPKO, OCHA, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WFP and WHO) to speed up the response of the peacekeeping, humanitarian and development communities to rape and other violations of women's rights in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Policy framework

In June 2007, the Secretary-General's Policy Committee endorsed UN Action as a UN system-wide initiative to guide advocacy, knowledge building, resource mobilization and joint programming – supporting the recommendations of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security of April 2007.

Areas of focus

UN Action is (i) supporting a global advocacy effort to galvanize public concern about rape as a method of warfare, (ii) amplifying the UN system's efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence at country level, and (iii) building a knowledge hub. UN Action aspires to build upon existing collaborative efforts, including the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the humanitarian response "cluster system".

Main activities

UN Action's advocacy efforts focus on raising public awareness and outrage about rape in war, as well as generating political will from bodies such as the Security Council and Human Rights Council to address rape in war as an issue of international peace and security, and a war crime and gross violation of human rights.

UN Action is providing strategic and technical support to selected UN Country Teams and Peace Keeping Operations to strengthen their efforts to prevent sexual violence, protect women, respond to the needs of survivors, and ensure judicial redress. It is also training a cadre of senior GBV Coordinators.

UN Action is building a knowledge hub, mapping good practice and effective responses to the needs of survivors and their communities

Address/website

The Secretariat for UN Action is based in UNIFEM – 304 E 45th Street New York, NY 10017, www.stoprapenow.org.