



News & Highlights

General Assembly adopts resolution establishing the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, “UN Women”, UNHQ New York, 2 July 2010

In its resolution on system-wide coherence, the General Assembly established a United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to be known as

held from 23-25 May 2009 and which reviewed and updated the 1997 Model Strategies and Practical Measures adopted by the General Assembly. The Commission adopted a draft resolution (E/CN.15/2010/L.2/Rev.1), recommending that the General Assembly adopt the updated Model Strategies contained in the annex to the resolution.

The draft resolution adopted by the Commission is available at:

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CCPCJ/session/19-resolutions.html>

The Council of the European Union adopts Conclusions on improving prevention to tackle violence against women and care to victims within the scope of law enforcement, Luxembourg, 26 April 2010

The Conclusions, inter alia, call for member States to make available to victims visible reporting mechanisms which can ensure confidentiality; develop tools to integrate and coordinate operational resources and assistance to prevent acts of violence against women; reinforce cooperation between

Eliminating Violence against Women: 15 Years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Fifteen years ago, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action identified the elimination of violence against women as critical to achieving equality, development and peace. The 15 year review of the implementation of the Platform for Action took place

Organization of American States established a mechanism to follow up on the implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women. The Arab Charter on Human Rights, which entered into force in 2008, provides that the State and society shall ensure the prohibition of all forms of violence or abuse in the relations among its members, and particularly against women and children. In 2002, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution entered into force. Council of Europe Recommendation (2002) on the protection of women against violence mandates States to take comprehensive action to address violence against women.

National level

The number and type of measures undertaken by Member States to prevent and address violence against women has significantly increased. More States are adopting comprehensive legislation on violence against women as the foundation for action. Such legislation not only criminalizes such violence, but also mandates support and protection for victims/survivors, prevention measures, and the creation of institutional mechanisms. Civil protection orders, which provide for the removal of perpetrators from a joint place of residence in cases of domestic violence, and/or the imposition of restrictions upon their behaviour, are available in more countries. Specialized courts, prosecutors, and police units and focal points for cases of domestic and/or sexual violence have been established in many countries.

Dedicated policies, including national action plans and strategies, on violence against women, or on a particular form of violence, have been adopted by many countries. Such action plans and strategies provide an overarching framework that can enhance coordination among relevant sectors and provide clear targets/timelines for activities. New institutional mechanisms have been established to address violence against women and define governmental lines of responsibility for addressing the issue, including multisectoral task forces, commissions and individual rapporteurs.

The availability and quality of services for victims/survivors of violence has increased, including legal services, shelters, hotlines, health services and counselling. A promising trend has been the establishment of centres that provide a range of services in one location. One-stop centres that provide integrated services and assistance to victims/survivors now exist in many countries.

In order to change societal attitudes that condone violence against women and perpetuate gender inequality, an increasing range of stakeholders, including representatives of government, the media, the private sector and civil society organizations, religious and community leaders, young people and celebrities, are becoming involved in initiatives to end violence against women. States are utilizing a range of methods to increase public awareness of, and sensitivity to, the issue of violence against women, as well as to inform women victims/survivors of their human rights. These include awareness raising campaigns; changes to school curricula to educate children on violence against women and women's human rights; publication of articles and information in electronic and print media; airing of television programmes and films; and public performances. States have undertaken initiatives to further engage men and boys in ending violence against women, including creating zero tolerance clubs and networks, taking part in national White Ribbon Campaign (iv), and participating in

New laws are often ineffectively enforced and not well understood by authorities. Laws/provisions that discriminate against women continue to exist, such as reductions in sentences for perpetrators who marry victims/survivors and mitigated sentences for perpetrators of so-called "honour" crimes. Impunity persists and women continue to be dissuaded from reporting their cases to the authorities due to fear of secondary victimization by the criminal justice system, stigma in the family or community, complexity of court procedures, and lack of awareness of their rights under the law.

The persistence of attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate negative stereotypes, gender inequality and violence against women remains a significant challenge. In many countries, services are only available in central locations and are underfunded. Knowledge regarding the scope, prevalence, impact and cost of all forms of violence against women remains inadequate and capacity for collecting such data is insufficient.

The way forward

Violence against women must be addressed in a comprehensive, multi-sectoral and sustained manner. Responses should include

Persistent impunity for violence against women requires action to ensure increased reporting, prosecution and sentencing. A

As at June 2010, the secretariat of the Secretary-General's database on violence against women has received 86 responses from Member States to the questionnaire on violence against women. Responses to the questionnaire constitute the primary source of information for the Secretary-General's database.

Member States that have not yet submitted a response to the questionnaire are encouraged to do so at their earliest convenience so that more detailed information can be reflected in the database.

The Secretary-General's database is available on line at: <http://www.un.org/esa/vawdatabase/>

Global strategy to stop health-care providers from performing female genital mutilation (WHO), 2010

This global strategy against medicalization of FGM has been developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, including UN entities, health-care professional bodies, national governments and NGOs. The strategy is intended for a broad audience of policy-makers in governments, parliaments, international organizations, professional associations, community leaders, religious leaders, NGOs and other institutions. Part I sets out the issue; part II relates the issue to global goals and concerns; part III explains the reasons why medicalization happens, why it should not happen and challenges that need to be overcome; and part IV spells out the strategy, which is based on the principles governing international human rights.

http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/fgm/rhr_10_9/en/index.html

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Addressing conflict-related sexual violence: an analytical inventory of peacekeeping practice (UN Department of peacekeeping operations, UN Action, UNIFEM), 2010.

This publication captures best practices and what works in preventing sexual violence and improving women's security. It catalogues direct and indirect efforts to combat sexual violence during and in the wake of war.

http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/Analytical_Inventory_of_Peacekeeping_Practice_online.pdf



Upcoming Events

27-29 July 2010: Regional workshop for Arab parliaments on implementing CEDAW and ending violence against women

This seminar is being organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Lebanese Parliament and the United Nations Development Programme. The seminar will take place in Beirut, Lebanon.

<http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/beirut10.htm>

13-15 September 2010: Expert group meeting on Good practices in national action plans on violence against women

The meeting is being organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women, now part of UN Women, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. The meeting will take place in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-egms-nap2010.htm>

October 2010: tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325

The tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security will be commemorated by a high-level event available at:

<http://www.unifem.org/campaigns/1325plus10/>

About *Words to Action*

Words to Action is a newsletter produced by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, now part of UN Women. It disseminates information on actions undertaken by Member States and UN entities to address violence against women. The Division for the Advancement of Women supports the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly the ed tions gender equality and the werment of women. For more information, see www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/ or contact wordstoaction@un.org.

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