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United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America/ Subregional
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on violence against women
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** The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations*

(i) Guiding principles

This paper contains exclusively the main content of the National Action Plan for the Elimination of gender-based violence against children, adolescents and women, which was created in 2007.

This is the first time that a National Government has assumed this issue as a State responsibility, and including 5 Ministries (Education, Interior, Health, Economic and Social Inclusion and Justice) and 2 Specific National Councils for Children, Adolescents and Women. Before that all the actions were motivated by the Civil Society Organizations, having external funding and not including the responsibility of the State in this social issue. This NAP is the only universal public policy for women over its entire life cycle in our country and also includes an intercultural approach.

The principal objective of this NAP is to eliminate this specific type of violence in our society, having 5 strategic central themes that frame all the actions that are planned in this public policy.

The strategic central themes are:

- 1.- Transformation of the socio-cultural stereotypes that perpetuate gender-based violence
- 2.- Integrate Protection System
- 3.- National Statistics System
- 4.- Access to Justice
- 5.- Institutionalization

In the first strategic central theme the main objective is to transform the social stereotypes and the practices that perpetuate gender-based violence, using communication alternatives to promote equality between men and women and also to generate awareness about this specific kind of violence.

In the second one the main objective is to guarantee the protection and restoration of rights of victims of gender violence, triggering a national protection system with all national institutions that have its responsibility.

In the third one, the objective is to reduce the impunity, ensuring that victims of gender-based violence have access to justice.

In the fourth central theme the objective is to create a national registration system with all national institutions that are responsible for recording instances of sexual and domestic violence. This data will be used to develop public policies around this specific social problem.

And the fifth has the objective to mainstream this public policy in all the national institutions through the allocation of financial and human resources to work in the elimination gender based violence.

This NAP also incorporates international standards and the recommendations of international bodies. Also including major institutions of national government's social area, trying to mainstreaming the gender perspective in all the actions that are planned to eliminate the gender based violence, and above all articulate activities to optimize resources. This NAP doesn't have his own budget, includes the 7 institution budgets.

At that moment we are currently working on a strategic plan which will define and articulate the actions to be implemented over the next five years.

(ii) Development and adoption of National Action Plans (NAPs) on violence against women (VAW)

This National Plan was created with a commitment by the Government towards the eradication of this specific type of violence, taking into account and building on efforts of civil society organizations, including women's organizations that have generated actions for the prevention and care of this specific type of violence. We began by undertaking an assessment of compliance of the Ecuadorian State on the elimination of violence, which was a national process, supported by UNIFEM-RA and executed for National Women Council, CONAMU and NGOs like CEPAM from Guayaquil, Corporación Mujer a Mujer, from Cuenca, and others. These recommendations formed the basis for building strategic lines of the Plan, and the conclusions recognize the expertise that already existed in women's organizations and civil society.

In Ecuador, the maternal and child health inquiry (ENDEMAIN 2004) includes a specific module on violence, which also provided basis for the development of the National Plan and which includes data on complaints of sexual violence and domestic violence in women and family welfare agency and the judicial police.

The design and preparation of this plan was undertaken through a series of meetings and consultations that were held with women from the civil society organizations and women's movements to identify the main issues related to the prevention and elimination of gender violence in our country. After this from Interior Ministry involved institutions responsible for social area of the national government in the drafting process. The plan was adopted by a Presidential Decree 620 on September 10, 2007.

The plan has identified the existence of a committee involving ministers who are in charge of implementing public policies for the eradication of gender violence and the

presidents of the councils who are responsible for formulating and overseeing the implementation of these policies and on the other side has a technical secretariat composed of representatives of each of the institutions that are part of the plan and should make possible the actions to be performed within the framework of this policy of state.

The decree mentions that the interior ministry is chairing this policy, so it is who is in charge to coordinate the national plan, with a coordination team.

(iii) Legislation

A number of laws are in place to combat violence against women, including, law 103 against violence against women and the family (1995), and now Article 66 of Ecuador's new constitution of 2008 which recognizes and guarantees "a life free of violence in the public and private". It also establishes that "the Ecuadorian State shall adopt the necessary measures to prevent, suppress and punish any form of violence particularly against women, children, adolescents, older persons, persons with disabilities and against any person or disadvantage or vulnerability; identical measures will be taken against violence, slavery and sexual exploitation"

The legal framework underlies the existence of the national plan and also supports the implementation of the actions needed to ensure access to justice and dignity and the elimination of impunity.

In addition to this Plan are including ministries, and also the national specialized Councils that have the responsibility to demand the implementation and enforcement of public policies, so that accountabilities are made where they have kept the public informed on progress with this policy of state.

Additionally, the Technical Secretariat of the Plan work about the observations to the laws that are discussed in the National Assembly to include the gender perspective and also all relevant comments to ensure inclusion of women, children and adolescents on those laws.

As one of the best practice processes at this point can be highlighted the comments made to the Civil Code of Judicial, which determines the need to convert to the Commissioners for Women and Family in courts against violence Women and the Family.

(iv) Criminal justice system

This plan has two strategic central themes, Integrate Protection System, and Access to Justice that pretend to attend women, children and adolescents, victims of gender violence. In this two lines the Plan is trying to guarantee a integral attention for gender

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victims that includes a legal framework, interdisciplinary attention and prevention work. Also Ministry of Justice is part of, and all this job is its responsibility.

(v) Prevention

Awareness-raising

The first strategic central theme is focus on prevention, it means that all the government institutions which work in this plan have to invest in awareness raising, at the moment we are implementing a national education-communication campaign called "Reacciona Ecuador, el machismo es violencia" using different elements to raise all Ecuadorian people.

For one side we

national education system, all the teachers will need to be capacitated in specific themes, one of this is the gender violence, all it will be for all the Ecuadorian teachers.

Sensitisation of the media

With the “Reacciona Ecuador el machismo es violencia” campaign all the mass media in Ecuador are motivated to start thinking in a different way and start to create a different way to communicate. Of course that this is not enough but the campaign produces that all Ecuadorian people question the way to relation each other.

In this National Plan we are consider to work in a direct way with journalist, publishers and media.

Safety

This Plan is articulate with the National Public Safety Plan because the gender violence it's considerate a public safety problem.

(vi) Protection, support, and assistance to victims/survivors

Support services

In the System Protection Integrate we are trying to guarantee the access to the justice and not generate more impunity for cases of gender violence. So they have worked on models of care, protocols, routing, reference standards and specific attention to such victims.

Additionally, through the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion is financially supporting 17 Integral Attention Centers and 4 Shelters to ensure comprehensive care, dignity, responsible, humane and free addition to victims of gender violence.

The same way there is the Integrated Care for children and adolescents violence that is being expanded to involve women as well.

We are currently working on a line 1800 to provide information on where to go if they are victim of domestic violence nationwide.

(vii) Training and capacity-building

The fifth strategic central theme is to ensure the institutionalization of all policies and actions established for the eradication of gender violence, so the team that makes up the technical secretariat has the obligation and commitment to build technical and human

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the item generating the priority actions to eradicate gender violence with budget, human resources and political support.

Specialized courts

What is being implemented is the creation of specialized courts dealing with violence