



Words to Action:

Newsletter on violence against women

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News & Highlights

25 November 2009: International Day on the Elimination of Violence against Women

The 10th International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was marked by a series of high-level statements and events at UNHQ and around the world.

▪ In his message for the International Day, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon affirmed:

“Our goal is clear: an end to these inexcusable crimes -- whether it is the use of rape as a weapon of war, domestic violence, sex trafficking, so-called “honour” crimes or female genital mutilation/cutting. We must address the roots of this violence by eradicating discrimination and changing the mindsets that perpetuate it.”

UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, 24 November 2009.

<http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=4255>

▪ The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Ms. Rashida Manjoo, seized the opportunity of the International Day on the Elimination of Violence Against Women to present her approach to the mandate, both in terms of thematic priorities and cooperation with other mechanisms, with a view to enhance efforts to eliminate violence against women. She stated:

“Significant progress achieved in recent years in the international legal response to violence against women has resulted in the explicit recognition of violence against women as a human rights concern. However, the reality on the ground shows that many forms and manifestations of violence against women remain endemic around the world, cutting across national boundaries, race, class, culture, tradition and religion. The consequences include the violation of dignity and also of the right to equality, non-discrimination, physical integrity and freedom from violence.”

UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, 24 November 2009.

<http://www.unhcr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/81D04AB92518A33AC1257678005E33C2?opendocument>

▪ The Secretary-General’s Campaign “UNiTE to End Violence against Women” launched new initiatives:

The Secretary-General launched his Network of Men Leaders to combat violence against women on 24 November 2009. The

Network supports the Secretary-General to challenge stereotypes, embrace equality, and inspire men and boys everywhere to speak out against violence. The leaders in this Network include current and former politicians, civil society and youth activists, religious and community leaders, cultural figures and other prominent individuals. In his opening address at the event, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on men and boys everywhere to join forces, break the silence, and “unite to change the practices and attitudes that incite, perpetuate and condone this violence.” The launch was followed by a roundtable discussion on “Involving men and boys in ending violence against women.”

<http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/network.shtml>

The Latin American component of the Secretary-General's Campaign “UNiTE to End Violence against Women” was launched on 25 November 2009 in Guatemala City in the presence of the President of Guatemala and other national and regional authorities. The UNiTE regional components will be instrumental in the design and implementation of specific strategies and projects to achieve the Campaign's outcomes at the field level during the course of the next five years.

Resolutions on violence against women adopted by the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly

▪ Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (A/RES/64/137): The resolution focuses on activities undertaken by UN entities, bodies, funds and programmes and calls for further intensification of efforts and coordination of work.

▪ Violence against migrant women workers (A/RES/64/139): The resolution builds on past efforts and further emphasizes the need for prevention of violence against migrant women workers and protection and support for migrant women who are victims of violence.

▪ The girl child (A/RES/64/145): The resolution emphasizes the need to formulate comprehensive and multidisciplinary plans or strategies to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against girls, and to protect girls from all forms of violence and assist those who are victims.

See: <http://www.un.org/ga/64/resolutions.shtml>



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UNIFEM launches global action platform to end violence against women, 6 November 2009

The global advocacy initiative Say NO – UNiTE to End Violence against Women will stimulate, count and showcase actions on ending violence against women. The innovative platform will spotlight global efforts and demonstrate the groundswell of support and actions on the issue. The multi-year initiative will contribute through advocacy and outreach to the UN Secretary-General's Campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women". The initial target is to reach 100,000 actions by March 2010 and 1 million actions in one year.

<http://www.saynotoviolence.org/about-say-no/>

UN Trust Fund announces grantees for 2009, 24 November 2009

The United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women announced that it would award nearly US\$10.5 million in 2009 to 13 projects and initiatives that are addressing gender-based violence in 18 countries.

http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=978

UN hosts special event on human trafficking, UNHQ, 22 October 2009

The event "Giving Voice to the Victims and Survivors of Trafficking", organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, included survivors of human trafficking, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo. In his opening remarks, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated, "Human trafficking touches on many issues, from health and human rights to development and peace and security. Our response must be equally broad, and must tackle this challenge at its roots".

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=32683&Cr=trafficking&Cr1>



EU ministerial conference on human trafficking, Brussels, Belgium, 19-20 October 2009

The conference "Towards EU Global Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings" brought together nearly 600 participants, including EU Member States, neighboring and other States, regional and international organizations, and non-governmental organizations. The objective of the conference was to address the development of

EU efforts to combat trafficking in human beings, with a focus on relations and cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination. The conference was initiated by the Swedish Presidency of the European Union under the Prevention and Fight against Crime Programme (ISEC Programme) of the European Commission.

About the conference:

http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/10/19/towards_eu_global_action_against_trafficking_in_human_beings

Conference Declaration:

http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Declaration-on-trafficking_23102009.pdf

International conference on women, peace and security, Oslo, Norway, 11-13 November 2009

The conference "Putting Policy into Practice: Monitoring the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security", hosted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian NGO FOKUS - Forum for Women and Development and UN-INSTRAW, brought together over 140 representatives of international women's organizations, networks, the United Nations and governmental organizations. The objectives of the conference were to take stock of existing efforts to monitor and evaluate the implementation of resolutions 1325 and 1820, including through national action plans; identify ways to strengthen monitoring and evaluation; and support dialogue and exchange between countries that are developing and/or implementing national action plans. The conference yielded a number of recommendations and next steps.

<http://www.un-instraw.org/en/gps/gps-homepage/fokus-m-e-conference.html>

Meeting of the "Friends of the Chair" of the United Nations Statistical Commission on indicators on violence against women, Aguascalientes, Mexico, 9-11 December 2009

The purpose of the meeting, organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía of Mexico (INEGI), was to continue work on developing indicators on violence against women; conduct an in-depth technical review of the methodologies currently applied to observe violence against women; and provide methodological advice for developing a set of guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women. The conclusions and recommendations of the meeting are available at:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/vaw/docs/ConclusionsAndRecommendations.pdf>

and

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/vaw/default.htm>



Feature Item:

Eliminating violence against women: the vital role of CEDAW

"The CEDAW Convention is at the core of our global mission of peace, development and human rights. The legal obligations contained in the treaty flow from the UN's most basic mandate for equal rights and the dignity of every human being."

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, 3 December 2009

Last year, 2009, marked the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women¹, which was adopted by the General Assembly in December 1979. The Convention and its monitoring body, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, have been pivotal in the recognition of violence against women as a human rights issue and in ensuring that the elimination of violence against women and the realization of women's human rights are common goals and shared obligations.

The Committee has made clear that although the Convention does not explicitly refer to violence against women, all forms of violence fall within the definition of discrimination against women as set out in article 1 of the Convention. In its general recommendation No.12 (1989), the Committee noted States' obligation to protect women from violence under various articles of the Convention, and requested them to include information on the incidence of violence and the measures adopted to confront it in their periodic reports to the Committee. In general recommendation No. 19 (1992), the Committee established that violence against women constitutes a form of gender-based discrimination and that discrimination is a major cause of such violence. This analysis unequivocally situated violence against women within the terms of the Convention and the international legal norm of non-discrimination on the basis of sex. It also made clear the obligations of States parties for the prevention of violence against women; the investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators; and for ensuring access to remedies, as well as support and services for victims.

Impact through monitoring

In connection with its examination of well over 400 reports of States parties since its establishment in 1982, the Committee has regularly called on States parties to prevent and address violence against women. It has noted positive initiatives, such as new and/or strengthened laws and policies which address one or multiple forms of violence against women; ratification of international instruments; establishment of institutions and mechanisms to coordinate and implement policies relating to violence against women; and provision of support and services for victims/survivors.

At the same time, the Committee has identified in its concluding observations to States parties areas of insufficient compliance with the Convention, such as the existence of discriminatory laws/provisions, gaps in the scope and coverage of legislation on violence against women, and lack of full implementation; the persistence of attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate negative stereotypes, gender inequality, and violence against women; limited protection and support for women victims/survivors; and inadequate knowledge and data on all forms of violence against women. And it has provided detailed country-specific guidance on further steps required to effectively address violence against women.

The Committee has consistently emphasized that States parties should put in place a holistic approach to addressing all forms of violence against women, including comprehensive legal and policy frameworks. It has urged States to ensure that violence against women is effectively prosecuted and punished; women victims of violence have immediate means of redress and protection; and public officials, including law enforcement personnel, the judiciary, health-care providers, social workers and teachers, are fully familiar with applicable legal provisions and sensitized to all forms of violence against women. The Committee has also recommended the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns and public education programmes; the establishment of support measures for victims/survivors of violence, including shelters, hotlines, and legal, medical and psychological support; and stressed the need for States parties to systematically collect data on all forms of violence against women.

¹ For information on events to commemorate the anniversary, visit UNIFEM's CEDAW 30th anniversary website: http://www.unifem.org/cedaw30/events_calendar/.



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Holding States parties accountable through the Optional Protocol

The Optional Protocol to the Convention, which entered into force in 2000 provides for an individual complaints procedure and an inquiry procedure. These procedures provide opportunities for holding States parties accountable for ensuring that violence against women is prevented and addressed. In the case of *A.T. v. Hungary*², the author claimed that the State party had failed in its obligations to protect her from the physical violence and threats of her former partner, which had been ongoing for a number of years. She could not access a shelter, as none in the country could support her and her two children, one of whom was disabled, and protection or restraining orders were not available under the State party's law. In this case the Committee noted a lack of specific legislation to combat domestic violence and sexual harassment, and of protection or restraining orders, and found that the avenues available to the complainant were "not capable of providing immediate protection to her against ill-treatment by her former partner". The Committee concluded that the obligations of the State party extended to the prevention of and protection from violence against women and that these remained unfulfilled, and thereby constituted a violation of the complainant's human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly her right to security of person. The Committee issued recommendations to the State party to address the specific situation of the complainant, as well as the general situation in the State party in regard to violence against women.

The cases of *Goekce v. Austria (deceased)*³ and *Yildirim v. Austria (deceased)*⁴ were brought on behalf of descendants of women who had been murdered by their husbands following a history of violence and death threats. While the Committee noted that the State party had established a comprehensive model to address domestic violence, it also pointed out that such a framework had to be supported by State actors who adhered to the State party's due diligence obligations in order for individual women victims of domestic violence to enjoy the practical realization of the principle of equality between women and men. It reiterated its view from *A.T. v. Hungary* that the perpetrator's rights could not supersede women's human rights to life and to physical and mental integrity. The Committee found a violation of the rights of the deceased to life and physical and mental integrity under the Convention, and made a number of recommendations to the State party, including to strengthen implementation of its legislation, speedily prosecute perpetrators, and enhance coordination among law enforcement and judicial officers and cooperation between all parts of the criminal justice system and non-governmental organizations working to protect and support women victims of gender-based violence.

In the inquiry into the abduction, rape and murder of hundreds of women in and around Ciudad Juárez, Mexico,⁵ the Committee raised the issue of impunity, which had prevailed for an entire decade, during which these crimes had been treated as common acts of violence belonging to the private sphere. The Committee noted that the existing pattern of discrimination "whose most brutal manifestation [was] extreme violence against women", had been ignored. Addressing the role of stereotypes and socio-cultural patterns of behaviour, the Committee emphasized that changing "a structural situation and a social and cultural phenomenon deeply rooted in the consciousness and customs of the population ... requires a global and integrated response ... aimed at transforming existing socio-cultural patterns" and "eradicating the notion that gender violence is inevitable". The Committee underlined the State party's responsibility to promote and guarantee the education and training of all public officials involved in investigations in regard to both technical aspects of investigation and the issue of violence against women as a violation of women's rights.

Way forward

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women have been instrumental in building global momentum for addressing all forms of violence against women. Through constructive dialogue with States parties, guidance provided in concluding observations, and views expressed under the individual complaints and the inquiry procedures, the Committee has helped to clarify States' obligations under the Convention to prevent and respond to violence against women. Enormous challenges remain, but the momentum gained thus far provides a solid basis for action to protect women and ensure their access to remedies when violations occur.

² *A.T. v. Hungary*, communication No. 2/2003; views adopted 26 January 2005. Full text available at: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/docs/Case2_2003.pdf.

³ *Goekce v. Austria*, communication No. 5/2005; views adopted 6 August 2007. Full text available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/495/43/PDF/N0749543.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁴ *Yildirim v. Austria*, communication No. 6/2005; views adopted 1 October 2007. Full text available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/495/37/PDF/N0749537.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁵ CEDAW/C/2005/OP.8/Mexico.



Feature Resources

International Framework for Action to Implement the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2009.

The Framework for Action is a technical assistance tool to assist Member States in the effective implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Framework is based on the objectives of the Protocol and its provisions, following the three internationally recognized themes of prevention, protection and prosecution (the 3Ps) and national and international cooperation and coordination. It recommends operational measures for each of the Protocol's provisions. These measures draw on other international instruments, political commitments, guidelines and good practices to enable the implementation of a comprehensive anti-human trafficking response.

Framework for Action:

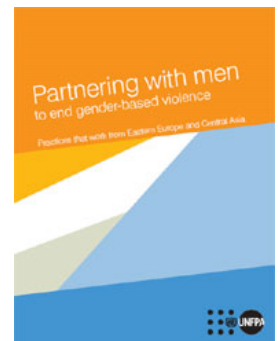
http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Framework_for_Action_TIP.pdf

Other resources

▪ *Partnering with Men To End Gender Based Violence: Practices that work from Eastern Europe and Central Asia, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2009.*

This report documents good practices in preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Five case studies document initiatives in Armenia, Romania, Turkey and the Ukraine that were implemented by governments and other partners with the support of UNFPA. Although the reports focus on initiatives in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the practices and lessons learned can be applied around the globe. The cases studies provide the reader with a step-by-step analysis of how each project was carried out. The publication is organized into two sections. The first consists of the five case studies; the second provides a synthesis of good practices from the region.

<http://www.unfpa.org/public/site/global/lang/en/pid/4412>



▪ *Pacific Perspectives on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children and Youth, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), 2009.*

This publication comprises three papers commissioned by ESCAP. The papers cover different aspects of the issues leading to, and associated with, commercial sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children in the Pacific.

http://www.unescap.org/esid/GAD/Publication/Pacific_Perspectives_Report.pdf

▪ *¡Ni una más! Del dicho al hecho: ¿Cuánto falta por recorrer?, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2009.*

The study is available in Spanish and focuses on efforts to end violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean. It contains information on legislative initiatives, government programmes and efforts led by civil society.

<http://www.eclac.cl/mujer/noticias/noticias/2/37892/Niunamas2009.pdf>



▪ *Working to Prevent and Address Violence Against Women Migrant Workers, International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2009.*

This publication presents the approach IOM takes toward the protection and empowerment of women migrant workers. By displaying key IOM activities in that area, the report seeks to better inform policy makers, practitioners and the public of the vulnerability of these women and of good practices for the protection of their human rights throughout the labour migration cycle.

http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=524&language=en



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▪ **Progress for Children: A Report Card on Child Protection (No. 8) (UNICEF), 2009.** This edition of Progress for Children reports some improvements but many remaining challenges to protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse.

PDF version available at:

http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Progress_for_Children-No.8_EN_081309.pdf

Upcoming Events

▪ **1-12 March 2010: 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**

The Commission will undertake a fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Emphasis will be placed on the sharing of experiences and good practices, with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges, including those related to the Millennium Development Goals. Member States, UN entities and non-governmental organizations will participate in the session. A series of parallel and side events organized will take place during this two week period.

For the latest information, see: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/index.html>

▪ **8 March 2010: International Women's Day 2010 – "Equal rights, equal opportunities: Progress for all"**

(To be commemorated at UNHQ on 3 March 2010.)

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/index.html>

▪ **15 April 2010: Expert consultation on the protection of the human rights of civilians in armed conflict**

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) will organize an expert consultation on the protection of the human rights of civilians in armed conflict. The seminar will take place in Geneva.

http://www2.ohchr.org/english/events/HR_civilians_aconflict/index.htm

About Words to Action

Words to Action is a newsletter produced by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of 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 in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat supports the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations on gender equality and the empowerment of women. For more information, see www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/

To subscribe, visit:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-newsletter-register.asp>