



# Words to Action:

## Newsletter on violence against women

July 2010  
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### 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 UN Women, by consolidating and transferring to the Entity all the existing mandates and functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The Entity will



be headed by an Under-Secretary-General and is to be operational by 1 January 2011. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the General Assembly's decision, stating:

"UN Women will significantly boost UN efforts to promote gender equality, expand opportunity, and tackle discrimination around the globe."

<http://www.unwomen.org/>

#### **Human Rights Council adopts resolutions on violence against women and trafficking in women and girls during its 14th session (31 May-18 June 2010), Geneva, Switzerland**

During its 14th session, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 14/12 on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: ensuring due diligence in prevention; and resolution 14/2 on trafficking in persons, especially women and children: regional and subregional cooperation in promoting a human rights-based approach

to combating trafficking in persons. During that session, Ms. Rashida Manjoo, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, presented her first thematic report to Council since her appointment in June 2009. The report focuses on reparations for women subjected to violence. Ms. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, also presented her report to the Council, which focuses on the role, added-value, good practices and initiatives of regional and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms in the fight against trafficking.

The resolutions adopted and reports considered during the 14th session are available at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/14session/>

#### **Seminar on "A human rights approach to combating human trafficking: challenges and opportunities" held during the 14th session of the Human Rights Council, Geneva, Switzerland, 27-28 May 2010**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized the seminar pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 11/3 on trafficking in persons, especially women and children. The seminar aimed at identifying opportunities and challenges in the development of rights-based responses to trafficking in persons. A report on the proceedings and outcome will be submitted to the Council.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10121&LangID=e>

#### **Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice recommends the adoption by the General Assembly of updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Vienna, Austria**

During its 19th session (17-21 May 2010), the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice considered the report of an intergovernmental expert group meeting, which was



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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 flexible 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 member States' competent authorities by means of information exchanges related to cross-border cases of violence against women and to victims of violence; and invite member States to promote specialized training for law enforcement personnel who work with women suffering from this scourge.

The Conclusions are available at:

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/114015.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/114015.pdf)

### **Inter-parliamentary Conference on female genital mutilation (FGM): "Towards the ban of the practice at the United Nations", Dakar, Senegal, 3- 4 May 2010.**

The Inter-parliamentary Conference brought together parliamentarians, civil society activists and government representatives from 28 African countries affected by the practice of FGM, as well as representatives of the African Union, the Pan-African Parliament, the ECOWAS Parliamentary Assembly, the East African Legislative Assembly, and United Nations entities. The Conference concluded with the adoption of a Final Declaration stressing the need to work for a universal ban on FGM. Among its main recommendations, the Final Declaration calls for the adoption of a resolution during the 65th session of the General Assembly banning FGM worldwide as a violation of the human rights of women and girls.

<http://www.npwj.org/FGM/Dakar-Inter-parliamentary-Conference-FGM-%E2%80%9CTowards-ban-practice-United-Nations%E2%80%9D.html>

### **Panel discussion "Hidden in plain sight: the news media's role in exposing human trafficking", UNHQ New York, 16 June 2010**



The panel discussion was sponsored by the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism at Brandeis University in collaboration with UNODC and the United States Mission to the United Nations. The

panel coincided with United Nations events commemorating the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. Panelists included journalists and researchers who have reported on human trafficking; the Executive Director of UNODC, Antonio Maria Costa; and a key note address was given by US Ambassador, Luis C. de Baca, US Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

UN audio library: <http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/detail/188119.html>

<http://www.brandeis.edu/investigate/events/2010/HiddenInPlainSight.html>

### **Launch of "Breakaway": a global electronic game to prevent violence against women and girls**

"Breakaway" is the result of a collaborative effort between the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Population Media Center and the Emergent Media Center at Champlain College. It uses football to engage and educate boys 8-15 years of age



in combating violence against women through an episodic, interactive game and social networking application delivered globally through the web and mobile technology. The game, launched during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, is an initiative under the United Nations Secretary General's campaign "UNiTE to end violence against women".

<http://www.breakawaygame.com/>



## Feature Item

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

*“There is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable.”*

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

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 during the fifty-fourth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, from 1-12 March 2010. That global review confirmed that while violence against women has become a priority issue for action at the global, regional and national levels, more needed to be done to implement existing obligations and commitments, address persisting challenges and effect real change in women's lives.

#### **Highlights of progress**

##### **Global level**

Significant progress has been made in elaborating an international legal and policy framework which makes clear that all violence against women is unacceptable and its prevention and elimination a public responsibility. The monitoring bodies of the international human rights treaties, in particular, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, systematically examine action to prevent and address violence against women. There have been several cases on violence against women under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women in which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has found violations by concerned States parties of provisions of the Convention. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime entered into force in 2003 and supports action to prevent and combat human trafficking. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court entered into force in 2002, providing the broadest statutory recognition of gender-based violence as a crime under international criminal law to date.

A range of policy instruments complement the international legal framework and provide guidance for action to address violence against women. In the Millennium Declaration in 2000 and the World Summit Outcome in 2005, Member States resolved to eliminate all forms of violence against women. Building on its commitment to women, peace and security through its path breaking resolution 1325 in 2000, and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security adopted in 2008 and 2009, the Security Council adopted resolutions dedicated to ending sexual violence in armed conflict. Following the issuance of the 2006 Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms and manifestations of violence against women, the General Assembly adopted a series of comprehensive and action-oriented resolutions, calling on all stakeholders to intensify their efforts to eliminate violence against women.

The United Nations Secretary-General launched his global campaign “UNiTE to end violence against women” in 2008, to run through 2015 (<http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/>). At the request of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General established in 2009 a database on violence against women — the first global “one-stop” site for information on measures undertaken by Member States to address violence against women (<http://www.un.org/esa/vawdatabase>).

##### **Regional level**

At the regional level, a number of legal and policy instruments have also been adopted calling on States to take action to eradicate violence against women. In November 2005, the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa entered into force, requiring States Parties to take measures to suppress all forms of violence against women, identify the causes, punish the perpetrators, and ensure effective rehabilitation and reparation for victims. In 2004, the



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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.

The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará) is the only treaty directed solely at eliminating violence against women. It asserts the right of women to be free from violence in both the public and private spheres. It stresses the link between violence and women's enjoyment of all other rights.

### **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 activities, and conducting nation-wide campaigns involving high-profile men, such as political figures and sporting celebrities.

There have been improvements in data collection on violence against women in order to facilitate better legal and policy responses, including a growing number of population-based surveys to assess the prevalence of violence against women, and collection of data on violence against women through a module within other population-based surveys, such as those on crime and victimization and quality of life.

### **Persisting challenges**

While there has been a significant increase in initiatives in all parts of the world to address violence against women, efforts are often not comprehensive, consistent or sustained, and coordination among relevant sectors and stakeholders is insufficient. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of measures taken is also inadequate. The scarcity of resources also constrains implementation.



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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 under funded. 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.

*“If we are to secure women’s rights and their freedom from violence, it is imperative that we adopt an integrated human rights perspective that stresses the equal importance of civil and political and economic and social rights.”*

Statement by Rashida Manjoo, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences to the 54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

### The way forward

Violence against women must be addressed in a comprehensive, multi-sectoral and sustained manner. Responses should include measures in the areas of law, policy, services, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, awareness raising and advocacy, and research and data collection. The promotion of women’s human rights and gender equality is paramount. Many good practices and achievements can be built upon to accelerate implementation of obligations and commitments to eliminate violence against women.

*“[The General Assembly] [u]rges States to continue to develop their national strategy and a more systematic, comprehensive, multisectoral and sustained approach aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women, including by achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, and by using best practices to end impunity and a culture of tolerance towards violence against women, inter alia, in the fields of legislation, prevention, law enforcement, victim assistance and rehabilitation.”*

United Nations General Assembly resolution 63/155, para. 16.

Comprehensive legislative and policy frameworks are a good practice, providing the critical foundation for efforts to prevent and effectively respond to violence against women. These frameworks must lead to improved monitoring, impact assessments and accountability to ensure their effectiveness. Adequate funding for their implementation is crucial. In addition to establishing provisions for penalizing and punishing perpetrators, legislative frameworks on violence against women should mandate support and protection for victims/survivors, prevention measures, training for relevant officials, funding and the creation of institutional mechanisms to monitor implementation of the law. National action plans/strategies should incorporate measurable goals and timetables, monitoring and accountability measures, provide for impact assessments, and ensure coordination of action and clear roles and responsibilities among all stakeholders.

Legislation on violence against women should:

- be comprehensive and multidisciplinary, criminalizing all forms of violence against women, and encompassing issues of prevention, protection, survivor empowerment and support (health, economic, social, psychological), as well as adequate punishment of perpetrators and availability of remedies for survivors.
- mandate the allocation of a budget for its implementation.
- provide for the creation of a specific, multi-sectoral mechanism to oversee implementation of the legislation and report back to Parliament on a regular basis.

DAW/DESA 2009 Handbook for legislation on violence against women





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Persistent impunity for violence against women requires action to ensure increased reporting, prosecution and sentencing. A range of measures is required, including training for law enforcement officials and gender-sensitive criminal justice processes and procedures that protect the complainant/survivor's rights and enhance their safety. Civil protection orders, civil law suits and other legal remedies should be available to complainants/survivors to complement criminal measures.

Victims/survivors of violence should have access to adequate and coordinated services. The provision of services, including counselling, shelter, and medical and legal services, in one location is a promising practice which should be replicated across regions. Services need to be available to all victims/survivors, including those in rural and remote areas.

Political commitment and leadership at all levels are indispensable to end all forms of violence against women. Such leadership must be complemented by a broad range of partnerships and the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders: Governments, civil society and in particular women's organizations, community leaders, international organizations, the private sector. The goal of eliminating violence against women must be pursued with the full involvement of men and boys.

Effective advocacy campaigns, including with the participation of the media, are critical for increasing public awareness of the unacceptability of violence against women and girls, raising women's awareness of their rights, and tackling gender stereotypes that perpetuate violence and discrimination against women. Such campaigns should extend throughout the country, including rural areas. Educational curricula at all levels should promote gender equality and women's human rights and condemn violence against women.

The availability of more and better quality information, including statistical data, is crucial. Such information allows policy makers to undertake effective legislative and policy reforms, ensure adequate provision of targeted and effective services, monitor trends and progress in addressing and eliminating violence against women, and assess the impact of measures taken. Statistical data should be gathered at regular intervals on the causes, consequences and frequency of all forms of violence against women, and on the effectiveness of measures to prevent and address such violence. Statistical data should be disaggregated by sex, race, age, ethnicity and other relevant characteristics.

Effective use should be made, at national and local levels, of the Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to end violence against women, to significantly increase momentum, in particular in the five key outcome areas of the campaign: adoption and enforcement of legislation, adoption and implementation of multisectoral action plans, data collection and analysis, national and/or local campaigns, and systematic efforts to address sexual violence in conflict situations.

*"We cannot embrace justice, peace and love if we fail to speak out to condemn violence against women. ... I invite you all to join me in efforts to end this major scourge... For my own part, I have made my choice I will not stand aside in this matter, nor will I surrender. I will continue fighting until the end of my days for the right of women and girls to live a life free from violence and abuse to become a reality."*

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Mpilo Tutu on the occasion of the launch of the Secretary General's Network of Men Leaders, 25 November 2009.

Immense challenges remain, but the experiences gained over the last 15 years of what works and how to achieve results provide a solid basis to accelerate and intensify efforts to prevent, punish and ultimately eradicate all violence against women.

This feature was prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women, now part of UN Women, on the basis of the 15-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, undertaken by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women during its fifty-fourth session, from 1-12 March 2010.



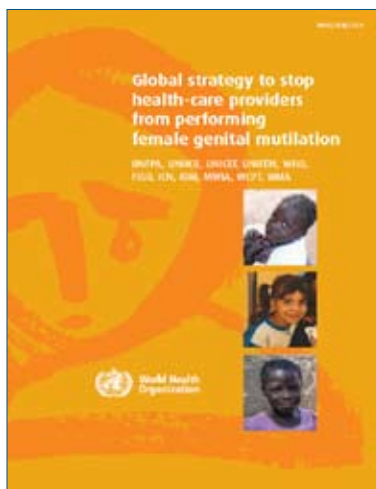
## Database update

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/>

## Feature Resource



### **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](http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/fgm/rhr_10_9/en/index.html)

### Other resources:

- **Addressing violence against women and HIV/AIDS: What works? (WHO and UNAIDS), 2010.**

In October 2009, a working group of expert researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners met to review the current state of evidence and practice in developing and implementing interventions and strategies to address the intersections of violence against women and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The meeting aimed to make policy and programmatic recommendations for national and international HIV/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) programmes and develop an agenda for future programme development, evaluation and research efforts. This report summarizes the presentations, discussions and recommendations from the meeting.

<http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241599863/en/index.html>



- **Handbook on effective police responses to violence against women (UNODC), 2010.**

This Handbook is designed to assist and guide police officers in the prevention of, and response to, violence against women. While it has global applications, it is designed primarily for use by police in transitional and developing countries where institutional means to protect women from violence have not yet been created or implemented.

[http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/hb\\_eff\\_police\\_responses.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/hb_eff_police_responses.pdf)



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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](http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/Analytical_Inventory_of_Peacekeeping_Practice_online.pdf)



### Upcoming Events

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- **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 at UNHQ as well as other events all over the world. More information about the resolution and events planned is available at:

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

### About Words to Action

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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 of the United Nations on gender equality and the empowerment of women. For more information, see [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/) or contact [wordstoaction@un.org](mailto:wordstoaction@un.org).

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