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***"Violence against women: Good practices in combating and eliminating violence against women"***

**Expert Group Meeting**

Organized by: UN Division for the Advancement of Women  
in collaboration with:  
UN Office on Drugs and Crime  
17 to 20 May 2005  
Vienna, Austria

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***Aide-Mémoire***

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**I. Background**

On 22 December 2003, the General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution entitled "In-depth study on all forms of violence against women" (A/RES/58/185). The resolution requests the Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth study on all forms and manifestations of violence against women (the full text of the resolution is attached for easy reference).

The resolution spells out five areas to be addressed in the study:

- (i) A statistical overview on all forms of violence against women, in order to evaluate better the scale of such violence, while identifying gaps in data collection and formulating proposals for assessing the extent of the problem;
- (ii) The causes of violence against women, including its root causes and other contributing factors;
- (iii) The medium and long-term consequences of violence against women;
- (iv) The health, social and economic costs of violence against women;
- (v) The identification of best practice examples in areas including legislation, policies, programmes and effective remedies, and the efficiency of such mechanisms to the end of combating and eliminating violence against women.

The resolution clarifies that the study is to cover all forms of violence against women as identified in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for

the twenty-first century”, and relevant documents, disaggregated by type of violence, and based on research undertaken and data collected at the national, regional and international levels.

The in-depth study will build on work that has been undertaken so far, synthesize and evaluate findings, and identify good practices and effective strategies, along with gaps and challenges. The study is intended to give a global picture of all forms of violence against women, the scale and prevalence of different forms of violence against women, its causes and consequences, as well as the costs of such violence. The study will identify gaps in knowledge and data collection, and give particular attention to good practice examples to highlight successful strategies to combat violence against women. Importantly, the study will include action-oriented recommendations that encompass effective remedies and prevention and rehabilitation measures. The study will be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session in September 2005.

### Good practices

The study is expected to identify ‘best practice examples in areas including legislation, policies, programmes and effective remedies, and the efficiency of such mechanisms to the end of combating and eliminating violence against women.’ The purpose of such identification is to enhance implementation of effective practices to combat violence against women.

Governments have provided examples of good practices for combating and eliminating violence against women in their reports under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in their responses to resolutions of the General Assembly on various aspects of violence against women, as well as in their responses to the questionnaire for the 10-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action. Non-governmental organizations and entities of the United Nations system have also compiled examples of, and analyzed, good practices in combating violence against women.

While States have undertaken many types of initiatives to address violence against women, the classification of any such initiative as a “good practice” is far from clear. Is the identification based on the achievement of the objectives that the initiative was targeted to achieve? Is it based on the reduction in incidents of violence? Is the effectiveness of an initiative measured in a quantitative or qualitative way and is such measurement reliable? Some groups have developed a set of comprehensive indicators to test the effectiveness of different strategies. However, researchers on the topic have found that the knowledge base on effective initiatives is relatively limited, that few approaches have been rigorously evaluated and, as a result, the most that can be said about certain approaches is that they appear more or less promising in tackling violence against women.

In order to address some of these questions and to identify and analyze good practices in combating and eliminating violence against women, the Division for

Advancement of Women will organize a meeting of experts. The proposed dates for this meeting are 16 to 20 May 2005, and the proposed venue is the United Nations Office in Vienna.

## **II. Objectives of the expert group meeting**

The development and implementation of an effective, comprehensive multidisciplinary strategy is necessary to combat violence against women. Governments, non-governmental organizations and women's rights activists all over the world have used different approaches in dealing with violence against women with varying degrees of success. The expert group meeting will bring together individuals who have a wealth of experience in strategies to combat violence against women. These experts will identify the factors which make a specific initiative, or type of initiative, a good practice example. In doing this they will evaluate the determinants or indicators of the effectiveness of strategies in various areas. The experts will then identify legislation, plans, policies and other approaches that have been effective in combating violence against women and analyze the various components of such strategies. The aim of the expert group meeting will be to arrive at a set of recommendations on 'good practice examples' in combating and eliminating violence against women.

The areas of discussion at the meeting will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) The determinants of effectiveness – what makes a practice to combat violence against women a “good practice”.
- (2) The justice sector:
  - elements of effective legislation on, but not limited to, domestic violence (including murder and violence against domestic workers), rape and sexual assault (including incest), sexual harassment, trafficking and situation specific forms of violence such as, among others, honor killings, female genital mutilation/cutting, dowry related violence, acid attacks and early and forced marriages, including effective procedures, sanctions and remedies;
  - factors to be considered for effective implementation and enforcement of legislation including, but not limited to, working with the judiciary, prosecutors, police and medical community;
  - effective policies on police intervention and training;
  - women's access to the justice system including, without limitation, provision of legal services and education about rights;
  - reform of laws that discriminate against women.
- (3) Support, rehabilitation and other services:
  - elements of effective health policies on identification, treatment and provision of services;

- effective policies on the provision and functioning of, among others, hotlines, crisis centers and shelters;
  - effective policies on, among others, education, training, economic support, housing and counseling of victims of violence and services for the children of such victims.
- (4) Awareness raising and capacity-building:
- elements of effective national, regional or community-based policies on education and awareness raising on violence against women;
  - elements of successful policies on capacity-building to respond to violence against women in the education and health fields and in institutions.
- (5) Factors and processes that contribute to the success of a multi-sectoral action plan to combat violence against women including, without limitation, guidelines for effective collaboration, budgets and institutional mechanisms to deal with violence against women.

### **III. Expected outcome**

The expert group meeting will result in a report on “good practices” in combating violence against women which will (i) analyze determinants or indicators of the effectiveness of strategies to combat violence against women and (ii) identify elements of ‘models of good practice’ with respect to legislation, policies, programmes and remedies. Since the success or effectiveness of an intervention is context-specific, the expert group will also compile a list of factors to be considered or questions to be asked when designing an approach for combating violence against women.

Experts will prepare and finalize their report by the end of the four-day meeting. It will consist of an analytical summary of the discussions as well as recommendations for further action. The meeting’s report will form the basis for the chapter, in the Secretary-General’s study, on best practices (sub-paragraph I (v) of resolution 58/185).

### **IV. Method of work**

The experts will prepare papers and case studies on “good practices” in combating violence against women focusing on particular interventions. These papers will also include a consideration of factors determining the effectiveness of various interventions. The expert group’s discussions will be guided by a background paper prepared by a consultant on behalf of the Division for the Advancement of Women to frame the discussion. The themes presented will then be further developed in working groups to sharpen the analysis and arrive at context-specific recommendations.

### **V. Profile of participants**

The expert group meeting will be attended by approximately fifteen (15) experts on strategies to combat violence against women, including lawyers, practitioners,

activists, researchers and academics. A small number of observers from United Nations entities will also attend. Staff of the Division for the Advancement of Women will support the meeting.

In selecting experts, attention will be paid to geographic and gender balance, as well as a range of expertise in strategies to combat all forms of violence against women. The Division for the Advancement of Women will provide travel, accommodation and daily subsistence allowance for invited experts.

## **VI. Documentation**

The documentation for the meeting will include the papers and case studies prepared by the experts and the background paper prepared by the consultant. The expert group meeting will be conducted in English only.

March 16, 2005