

**Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Violence against Women,  
including Domestic Violence**

**Closing Conference  
10 – 11 June 2008  
Council of Europe, Palais de l'Europe  
Strasbourg, France**

**“Good practices to prevent and combat violence against women”**

**Remarks by  
Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director  
United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women**

**<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/>**

I am honoured to participate in the closing conference for the Council of Europe's campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence. I congratulate the Council of Europe on this important initiative which constitutes a significant good practice in itself.

The work of the United Nations on violence against women – in the context of the in-depth study on violence against women, and the General Assembly resolution 61/143 – has highlighted the same critical points raised during this conference yesterday and today. Violence against women is a complex and pervasive global phenomenon. It is now well-established that such violence stems from historically unequal power relations between men and women and pervasive discrimination against women both in the private and public spheres. Violence against women occurs in all countries of the world, in different settings, and women are exposed to forms of violence across their life cycle: beginning from before birth to old age. Although data availability is poor and uneven, it is estimated that, on average, one in three women is subject to violence at some point in her lifetime.

Violence against women is a violation of women's human rights with far-reaching consequences for the victims, their children and communities, and for society as a whole. Women who experience violence suffer a range of health problems. Their ability to earn a living and to participate in public life is diminished, and their access to, or ability to get or further their education, is compromised.

The direct and indirect costs of violence against women to society as a whole include lowered economic production, reduced capital formation, resources required for programmes for victims/survivors of violence, as well as costs associated with social instability through inter-generational transmission of violence.

Violence against women undermines the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, including those in the areas of poverty eradication,

education, child health, maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS and overall sustainable development.

The topic for this morning's session is good practices to prevent and combat violence against women. As part of the campaign, Council of Europe Member States were urged to make significant progress in the areas of legal and policy measures, support and protection for victims, data collection, and awareness-raising. They were encouraged to collect and disseminate good practices in the areas of prevention, protection and prosecution.

The four areas of action align closely with the categories of promising practices identified in the 2006 in-depth study on all forms of violence against women of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (A/61/122/Add. 1 and Corr. 1): law; service provision; and prevention. The study also highlighted the urgent need for data collection on violence against women. I would therefore like to share some of the guiding principles of good practices elaborated in the Study, as well as some of the Division for the Advancement of Women's ongoing work in this area.

The Secretary-General's study noted that good or promising practices have been developed by many States to meet their human rights obligations to address violence against women. The most promising practices in all areas involve a clear demonstration of political commitment to eliminate violence against women, as evidenced by statements by high-level government officials, backed by action and the commitment of resources by the State. In addition, promising practices involve women fully and to use their experiences of violence — including the complexities that arise from multiple discrimination — as the starting point for developing laws, policies and programmes, awareness-raising, education and outreach efforts, and data collection.

There are some generic aspects of good or promising practices that can be extracted from a variety of experiences around the world. Common principles of such practices include: clear laws that make violence illegal; targeted policies, protocols and procedures to support implementation of these laws; strong enforcement mechanisms; effective and well-trained personnel; the involvement of multiple sectors; and close collaboration with local women's groups, civil society organizations, academics and professionals. These elements of good practice were elaborated at an expert group meeting convened by the Division in 2005, as part of the preparatory process for the Secretary-General's study. The report of the meeting, which is available on the Division's website, provides examples of such good practices.

Collaboration and coordination between Governments, NGOs and civil society organizations are vital in the development of effective practices to eliminate violence against women. Examples include alliances and coalitions between Government and NGOs that draw on the experience and expertise of the most active and informed partners — women's groups and networks — in designing and implementing programmes. Coordination and networking between State sectors, such as the justice system and the health, education and labour sectors, is widely seen as good practice. The formation of strategic coalitions and alliances between groups working on violence against women and

those working on other issues, such as HIV/AIDS, women's economic empowerment and other aspects of social justice, is also good practice.

The work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women - in monitoring implementation of the Convention in the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW) with regard to violence against women, as well as under the Optional Protocol - enhances State accountability for the promotion and protection of women's human rights, including their right to be free from violence. The Committee's recommendations to States in concluding observations, synthesize the standards for compliance that constitute the elements of good practice. The Committee expects that States parties:

- Address all forms of violence against women as a form of discrimination against women that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men and constitutes a violation of their human rights.

The Committee also expects that States parties:

- Address all forms of violence against women in a comprehensive and holistic manner, including through a range of critical actions: enactment and enforcement of laws criminalizing such violence; reform of discriminatory laws that increase women's vulnerability to violence; gender-sensitivity training for parliamentarians, legislators, the judiciary, law enforcement personnel and health service providers; improvement of women's access to the justice system including through legal aid; establishment and proper funding and monitoring of services and shelters for victims; and implementation of awareness raising campaigns and public education programmes to change attitudes.

The Committee further expects that States parties:

- Enhance the knowledge base through: systematic data collection and research on all forms of violence against women, including on the root causes of such violence to strengthen capacity for preventing it; assessment of trends; and monitoring of the impact of programmes and policies established to address violence against women, including evaluation research to determine good practice. The Committee draws attention to the need for addressing all forms of violence and for targeted support to certain groups of women and the elimination of their vulnerability to violence.

Discussion of good or promising practices in tackling violence against women must always bear in mind that responses emerge in particular contexts and circumstances, often building on and learning from what has been tried before. As experience grows, existing practices may be eclipsed by innovations and new insights that offer even more promise in efforts to prevent and redress violence against women. Opportunities for exchanging and sharing experiences between different stakeholders within countries, across regions and at global level are essential for building a virtuous cycle of learning, innovation and improvements.

Last month, the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, convened another meeting of experts on good practices in legislation on violence against women, to analyze different legislative approaches; assess lessons learned in regard to laws and legislative reforms on violence against women; and identify effective approaches and recommended strategies for legislation. The experts developed guidelines and a model framework for legislation on violence against women. The outcome of the expert group meeting, which is expected to become available later this summer, will also contribute good practices for the Secretary-General's database on violence against women, which is currently under development.

The availability of accurate and comprehensive data has been acknowledged as crucial for guiding legislative and policy reforms; ensuring adequate provision of targeted and effective services; monitoring trends and progress in addressing and eliminating violence against women; and assessing the impact of measures taken. Based on work done during the preparatory phase of the Secretary-General's Study, in October 2007 the Division convened an expert group meeting on indicators to measure violence against women, in cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division and the Economic Commission for Europe, and in collaboration with the four other United Nations regional commissions. The meeting proposed four prevalence indicators for use at the international level. It emphasized the role of national statistical offices in collecting data and building global-level indicators on violence against women. This work will be taken forward over the coming year by both the United Nations Statistical Commission and Commission on the Status of Women.

On 25 February 2008, the Secretary-General of the United Nations announced his global campaign to end violence against women and girls. This campaign, which will run from 2008 until 2015, the target date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, provides opportunity for a range of stakeholders to work together to stop violence against women and girls. A high-level event will be convened in 2010. The Secretary-General's campaign is focused on three key areas – significantly enhanced global advocacy, strengthened efforts and partnerships at the national and regional levels, and United Nations leadership by example. The Secretary-General announced his intention to continue to work closely with women's groups and networks. He will form a global network of male leaders to assist in mobilizing men and boys in the struggle to end violence against women. The secretary-General noted that the media have a critical role to play in efforts to end violence against women. The United Nations is currently developing an Action Plan and campaign materials. In this context, the experience of the Council of Europe in its campaign over the past 20 months serves as an important good practice example and can provide guidance for the work at global level. Similarly to the approach in the Council of Europe, a Steering Group has been established to guide the development of the campaign.

The Council's campaign has galvanized awareness of the global nature of the pandemic of violence against women and girls; strengthened political commitment for action; demonstrated the impact of such violence on the ability of women and girls to

enjoy their human rights. It has united a range of stakeholders to take action. While work on violence against women has gained momentum, it nevertheless persists everywhere. At this closing conference, which everyone is in agreement is only the end of the beginning of the efforts to end violence against women, it is important to identify and creatively build on the gains made, scale up efforts and ensure sustained positive impact on the lives of women and girls.

It is positive that one of the recommendations being discussed in the Council of Europe today is a convention on violence against women. I believe that, in keeping with the global focus on all forms of violence against women in the United Nations – in the on-going work of the General Assembly, the in-depth study of the UN Secretary-General and the campaign of the Secretary-General – the focus of the convention in the Council of Europe should not be restricted to some forms of violence but should cover violence against women and girls in all its forms.

Identifying and broadly disseminating good and promising practices is one important element of scaling up and strengthening work on eliminating all forms of violence against women. I look forward to the presentations of concrete examples and the discussion to follow today, as well as to continuing close cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe on this critical issue.

Thank you.