



Words to Action:

Newsletter on violence against women

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News & Highlights

United Nations Secretary-General appoints Under Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

On 14 September 2010, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed former Chilean President, Michelle Bachelet, to head the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Ms. Bachelet was sworn in on 19 September 2010. During a press conference, Ms. Bachelet explained that the creation of UN Women provided an opportunity to accelerate the efforts of the United Nations system to drive progress in meeting the needs of women



and girls worldwide, including in areas such as the eradication of violence against women. Asked how she would aid in efforts to end violence against women, Ms Bachelet referred to the need for strong

legislation and the implementation of such legislation; as well as the need to educate individuals from an early age concerning respectful ways of solving conflicts and preventing violence.

http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2010/100922_Bachelet.doc.htm

<http://www.unwomen.org/2010/09/former-chilean-president-to-head-new-high-profile-un-womens-agency/>

United Nations High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG Summit), UNHQ New York, 20-22 September 2010

The High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals brought together Heads of State, joined by leaders from civil society organizations, foundations and the private sector. The outcome document adopted by the General Assembly includes an action agenda for achieving the Goals by 2015. In the outcome document, Member States committed to accelerating progress to achieve Millennium Development

Goal 3 (promoting gender equality and empowerment of women), including through "[s]trengthening comprehensive national laws and policies and programmes to enhance accountability and raise awareness, prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and girls everywhere ... and ensure that women have access to justice and protection, and that all perpetrators of such violence are duly investigated, prosecuted and punished in order to end impunity ...". In respect of the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 5 (improve maternal health), they committed to accelerating progress, including by "taking action at all levels to address the interlinked root causes of maternal mortality and morbidity, such as poverty, malnutrition, harmful practices, lack of accessible and appropriate health-care services, information and education and gender inequality, and paying particular attention to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls".



<http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/>

The outcome document is available at:

<http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/documents.shtml>

General Assembly adopts and launches a United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, UNHQ New York

The General Assembly adopted the Global Plan of Action on 30 July 2010 (see resolution 64/293) and formally launched the Plan of Action at a high-level meeting on 31 August 2010. "With



this Global Action Plan, we have announced our steadfast commitment to stop human trafficking," said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in opening remarks at the launch. The Secretary-General



stated that “the Global Plan of Action strengthens the three “P”s: Preventing human trafficking; Prosecuting offenders; and Protecting victims. It also promotes a fourth, critical “P”: Partnership.”

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/ga10968.doc.htm>

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/ga10974.doc.htm>

Resolution 64/293 is available at:

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

Human Rights Council adopts resolutions on maternal mortality and discrimination against women at its 15th session (13 September-1 October 2010), Geneva, Switzerland

During its 15th session, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 15/23 on discrimination against women, and resolution 15/17 on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights. In its resolution on discrimination against women, the Human Rights Council recognized that women’s inequality before the law has resulted in, inter alia, increased vulnerability to violence. The Council decided to establish, for a period of three years, a working group of five independent experts on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice. The resolution on maternal mortality encouraged States and other relevant stakeholders to take action at all levels to address the interlinked root causes of maternal mortality and morbidity, paying particular attention to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls.

The resolutions adopted during the 15th session are available at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/15session/resolutions.htm>

Expert group meeting on good practices in national action plans on violence against women, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 13-15 September 2010

The meeting, 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/Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, focused on identifying good practices in national action plans on violence against women. The meeting developed a model framework for national action plans on violence against women to serve as a tool for Member States and other stakeholders in their efforts to adopt and implement such plans. This framework is expected to become available in early 2011.

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-egms- nap2010.htm>

Regional workshop for Arab parliamentarians on implementing CEDAW and ending violence against women, Beirut, Lebanon, 27-29 July 2010

The workshop was organized jointly by the Lebanese Parliament, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the United Nations Development Programme. Legislating on violence against women was seen as one of the most pressing priorities in the region. The workshop was followed by a day of discussions with Lebanese parliamentarians and civil society representatives on a bill on domestic violence currently before the Lebanese Parliament.

<http://www.ipu.org/news-e/latest.htm>

XI Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, Brasília, Brazil, 13-16 July 2010

The conference gathered over 700 participants from 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries. It was organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, with the support of the Secretariat on Policies for Women of Brazil. In the Brasília Consensus, the outcome document of the conference, participating Governments agreed to a range of measures to address all forms of violence against women. These include: broaden and guarantee effective access to justice, and to free legal assistance for women in violent situations; mainstream

into public safety policies specific measures for preventing, investigating, sanctioning, penalizing and eliminating femicide and feminicide; promote policies aimed at changing the sociocultural patterns that reproduce violence and discrimination against women; create national gender-based violence surveillance systems to collect, compile and analyze data on gender-based violence; promote and adopt measures to ensure budget allocations for programmes aimed at preventing violence against women.

<http://www.eclac.org/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/prensa/noticias/comunicados/7/40237/P40237.xml&xsl=/prensa/tpl-i/p6f.xsl&base=/prensa/tpl-i/top-bottom.xsl>

The English version of the Brasília consensus is available at: http://www.eclac.org/mujer/noticias/paginas/6/40236/ConsensoBrasilia_ING.pdf





Feature Item

Addressing violence against women and HIV/AIDS effectively

Women living with HIV are more likely to have experienced violence, and women who have experienced violence are more likely to have HIV.

Addressing violence against women and HIV/AIDS: What Works? WHO and UNAIDS, 2010

Inter-linkages between violence against women and HIV/AIDS, and lessons learned for prevention

The link between violence against women and HIV infection is undeniable¹, complex and involves multiple pathways. Violence is a driver of the HIV epidemic among women, as it increases women's vulnerability to HIV infection. It can also be a consequence of being HIV positive. Rape, for example, can be a direct cause of infection with HIV for women. More importantly, violence places women at increased risk of infection by creating an environment in which they are unable to adequately protect themselves from HIV. Women in abusive relationships are often unable to negotiate safe sex.² Fear of violence, discrimination, abandonment and loss of economic support are commonly cited factors that keep women from learning their HIV status,³ and thereby accessing treatment, care and support.⁴

Interventions to address the interface between violence against women and HIV are being increasingly implemented and assessed. A number of broad principles and lessons can be drawn from the growing body of well-evaluated, promising programmes that should inform the work on violence against women and HIV prevention.⁵

Lessons learned from existing interventions and programmes

- **Gender-equality interventions should be part of programming on violence against women and HIV prevention**

Interventions that address structural factors, gender inequalities and harmful gender norms are essential for prevention of violence against women and HIV. Gender equality interventions should therefore seek to empower women economically and increase their awareness of their rights. Such interventions should involve communities, including men and boys, in challenging harmful gender norms. Programmes designed to reduce violence against women in the context of HIV prevention should consider the full range of diversity of persons experiencing and perpetrating gender-based violence and should be informed by a human rights-based approach. Policies and programmes that address gender inequality and gender-based violence will also help achieve universal targets for HIV prevention, treatment and care.

- **Comprehensive post-rape care is essential**

Access to quality, comprehensive post-rape care services, including post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) according to WHO guidelines, appropriate counselling and mental health support, is critical for mitigating the consequences of sexual violence, including HIV risk. Post-rape care should be delivered in the most appropriate and cost-effective way, depending on the setting, and with adequate multisectoral linkages.

- **Violence against women awareness in the context of HIV testing and counselling**

Training for HIV testing counsellors should include intimate partner violence and sexual violence. Risk reduction counselling, and HIV disclosure counselling should be tailored to the specific situation of women in violent relationships.

- **Violence against sex workers and HIV**

Programmes and policies to prevent HIV among sex workers should recognize that sex workers experience violence from a range of perpetrators, including clients; individuals, such as brothel owners or other go-betweens who control clients' access to sex workers or sex workers' access to clients; and law enforcement. Such violence affects their ability to protect themselves, use condoms and access treatment.



Other interventions, such as those to reduce the harmful use of alcohol and to increase the access of young people to information through comprehensive sexuality education, have yet to be evaluated, but also seem to be important to both HIV and violence against women prevention.

The role of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in addressing violence against women

Priority areas of UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, include meeting the HIV-related needs of women and girls and stopping sexual and other forms of gender-based violence. UNAIDS' *Agenda for accelerated country action for women, girls, gender equality and HIV* is based on the premise that synergies between promotion of gender equality and HIV/AIDS prevention must be strengthened.⁶ The Agenda responds to the pressing need to address the persistent gender inequalities and human rights violations that put women and girls at a greater risk of HIV. Empowering women and girls (through, e.g., education, employment and peer support) and utilizing opportunities for a comprehensive approach to sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, contributes to meeting the HIV needs of women and girls and reducing sexual and other forms of gender-based violence. However, political will and concerted action are needed to move from words to action.

UNAIDS goals for 2011

- At least 25 countries include at least three strategic actions guided by the UNAIDS Agenda for accelerated country action for women, girls, gender equality and HIV in their national strategic plan, with an appropriate budget for implementation.
- At least 15 countries initiate implementation of a comprehensive set of actions to prevent and address violence against women.

This feature was prepared by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Division for the Advancement of Women, now part of UN Women.

1 Research from countries in different regions of the world increasingly documents this link. See, *Addressing violence against women and HIV/AIDS: What Works?* WHO and UNAIDS, 2010, page 9-11 of report; see also, case studies referred to throughout the report. The report is available at:

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

2 Ibid, page 1.

3 See *Together we Must! End violence against women and girls and HIV&AIDS* (UNIFEM, ACTION AIDS, 2009), pages 4 and 6. The report is available at: <http://www.genderandaids.org/>

4 Ibid, page. 4.

5 The report *Addressing violence against women and HIV/AIDS: What Works?* (see footnote 1 above) contains policy and programmatic recommendations for national and international HIV/AIDS programmes based on these principles and lessons.

6 The *Agenda for accelerated country action for women, girls, gender equality and HIV* (UNAIDS, 2009) is available at: http://www.unaids.org/en/Priorities/03_07_Violence_against_women.asp



Database update

As of 30 September 2010, 101 Member States have provided their responses to the questionnaire on violence against women. The Secretariat has continued to receive useful updates from Member States.

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



Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: taking action and generating evidence (WHO and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), 2010

This document provides information for policy-makers and planners to develop data-driven and evidence-based programmes for preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women. It aims to strengthen the field of intimate partner and sexual violence prevention so that prevention efforts can complement health, legal and service-delivery programmes that respond to the problem. The document is built around a life-course perspective that recognizes how infant and early childhood experiences influence the likelihood of becoming a perpetrator or victim of intimate partner and sexual violence. The paper reviews the latest available scientific findings on effective, promising and theoretically feasible prevention strategies. A public health model is used to highlight the steps needed to address the underlying determinants at the individual, family, community and societal level.

<http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241564007/en/index.html>

Other resources:

- ***Needs assessment toolkit on the criminal justice response to human trafficking (UNODC), 2010.***

This toolkit was developed by UNODC within the framework of the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT). It aims to provide comprehensive guidance for assessing the criminal justice response to trafficking in persons in a given State. The toolkit broadens the scope of traditional criminal justice responses by including all relevant actors and measures involved in appropriately prosecuting the perpetrators and adequately assisting the victims of trafficking in persons.

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/needs-assessment-toolkit.html>

- ***Review of the sexual violence elements of the judgments of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and the Special Court for Sierra Leone in the light of Security Council resolution 1820 (DPKO), 2010***

This document reviews the sexual violence elements of the judgments of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). It offers a comprehensive overview of how sexual violence in armed conflict can be interpreted and addressed under international law. It provides easy reference to the conclusions reached by the ICTY, ICTR and SCSL with regard to sexual violence in armed conflict. This publication can be downloaded from: <http://www.stoprapenow.org/advocacy-resources/>

- ***Legislative reform to support the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) (UNICEF), 2010***

This paper presents the key features of a comprehensive legislative framework to support the abandonment of FGM/C. It provides specific guidance on the content of the legislation, and its relationship to the process of social change that such legislation is meant to support. The paper serves as guidance for legislators, parliamentarians, jurists, lawyers, judges, government officials, human rights and children's rights advocates, policy-makers, and all those involved in laws, programmes and policies that address FGM/C.

http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/UNICEF_-_LRI_Legislative_Reform_to_support_the_Abandonment_of_FGMC_August_2010.pdf



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- **Addressing violence against women and girls in sexual and reproductive health services: a review of knowledge assets (UNFPA), 2010**

This report reviews literature on the integration of activities to address gender-based violence against women and girls into sexual and reproductive health services. It provides guidance to health-sector programme designers and managers.

<http://www.unfpa.org/public/cache/offonce/home/publications/pid/6233;jsessionid=3DAE7BD47FDAD28E73099254558580AA>



- **Video "The missing MDG target: violence against women" (UNIFEM/UNTV), 2010**

UNIFEM, now part of UN Women, in collaboration with UNTV, has produced a series of five videos highlighting select MDGs from a gender perspective. This video is introduced by internationally renowned TV journalist Daljit Dhaliwal and is available in English, French, Spanish and Russian.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRb1PPIblfQ&feature=Playlist&p=E0EFE0E969E5F41F&index=4>

http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=1167

- **Eurobarometer survey on domestic violence against women (European Commission), 2010**

This survey, which was requested by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security, measures how domestic violence against women is perceived in European public opinion. The survey showed a greater awareness of domestic violence and desire for tougher action, compared to an earlier Eurobarometer survey conducted in 1999.

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_en.htm#344

- **UNRWA Gender Series, No. 1: Community of practice in building referral systems for women victims of violence (UNRWA), 2010**

This document is the outcome of a workshop organized by UNRWA on "Community of practice in building referral systems for women victims of violence". It summarizes and reflects on the presentations and discussions to develop lessons learned based on shared experiences of a community of practitioners.

http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=318&pubsearch=1&srchcat_id=46&srchkey=Keywords&srchfile_year=Year&srchfile_series=&srchfile_id=

Upcoming Events

- **25 November 2010: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**

The eleventh anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women will be celebrated at UNHQ and around the world.

- **25 November to 10 December 2010: 20th 16 Days of activism against gender violence campaign**

This year's theme is "Structures of violence: Defining the intersections of militarism and violence against women."

<http://16dayscwg.rutgers.edu/2010-campaign/theme-announcement>

- **24-25 November 2010: Expert workshop on measures for overcoming obstacles and challenges States may face in preventing, investigating, prosecuting and punishing perpetrators of violence against women and girls**

This workshop is being organized by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with resolution 11/2 of the Human Rights Council of June 2009.

About Words to Action

Words to Action is a newsletter produced by the 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 <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/> or contact wordstoaction@un.org.

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