

## **Submission of the Government of Brazil with respect to initiatives undertaken to confront violence against women, pursuant to resolution 58/185 and the preparation of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on violence against women**

### **Facing violence against women**

One of the serious problems of humankind is violence. In general, all over the world, violence is one of the main causes of mortality among people with ages between 15 and 44 years. The intentional use of physical force or abuse of power against another person, group or community has harmful consequences for humanity.

Violence is a complex phenomenon that is expressed in several ways. It can be committed against third parties or against the subject of the violent action him or herself, it can occur within an interpersonal relationship or affect a whole community, it can be committed by one person, by groups or nations.

Both men and women, due to specific aspects of gender, are affected by violence in different ways. While a great part of the violence committed against men occurs in the streets, in public spaces, and, in general, practised by another man, women are most often attacked at home, in a private space, and the perpetrator of the aggression is typically a close person: boyfriend, husband, partner or lover.

Violence against women is present all over the world and involves women of all ages, social classes, races, ethnic groups, and sexual orientation. Irrespective of the type: physical, sexual, psychological, or related to assets, violence is associated to power and to inequality in gender relations, due to general domination by men, and it is also associated to the dominant ideology that supports it.

There are many forms of violence against women: salary inequalities; sexual harassment; the use of the body as an object; cases of sexual aggression, moral harassment, the national international traffic of women and girls. Recent information, coming from research and from care delivered in specialized services, such as Specialized Police Superintendencies, Centres of Reference and Shelters for Battered Women, show the magnitude of the problem. In a piece of research carried out by the Perseu Abramo Foundation, 43% of women admit, when a direct question is asked, having suffered some form of violence, but spontaneous, by only 19% admit having been submitted to some form of violence.

This work shows that approximately one in five Brazilian women underwent some type of violence on the part of some man. "The projection of the rate of ill treatment (11%) for the universe studied (61, 5 million) indicates that at least 6, 8 million, among living Brazilian women have already been mistreated at least once". The projection is of at least 2, 1 million women mistreated per year, that is, one for every 15 seconds".<sup>30</sup>

The national report on the Research on Traffic of Women, Children and Adolescents with Purposes of Commercial Social Exploitation in Brazil, co-ordinated by CECRIA (2002)<sup>31</sup>, proves that the traffic with sexual purposes predominates for Afro-descendant women and adolescents, with ages between 15 and 25. The research shows that out of the 131 international routes, 102 have to do with the traffic of women, 60 are used for transporting "only women" and of the 78 inter-state routes, 62 are used for transporting adolescents. Adult women are preferably transported to other countries.

Another serious fact is the sexual abuse of young people. Based upon the research *Youth and Sexuality* (UNESCO, 2004)<sup>32</sup>, it is estimated that one out of each three or four young girls is sexually abused before the age of 18. The Ministry of Justice records every year approximately 50.000 cases of sexual violence against girls and adolescents.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2002)<sup>33</sup>, a study carried out in South Africa, Australia, Canada, the United States and Israel confirms that among female victims of murder, between 40 and 70% were killed by their husbands and boyfriends, typically in the context of a relationship involving constant abuse. In Brazil, the women's movement of Pernambuco has denounced the high Number of murders of women in that State: there were 369 victims in 2002 and 300 and in 2003<sup>34</sup>. In Ceará, according to the Secretariat for Public Safety and Social Defence, 110 women were victims of murder in 2002.

According to WHO "in addition to the human costs, violence represents a huge economic burden for societies in terms of loss of productivity and of the increase in the use of social services" (WHO, 2002). The report says that 13% of women researched in Nagpur (India) leave a remunerated job due to abuse and that they miss approximately seven working days after each incident; 11% of women attacked were unable to do household chores due to an episode of violence. Although gender violence does not, in general, constantly affect the overall likelihood of a woman finding a job, it seems that such episodes do influence the level of salary and women's ability to keep their jobs.

Studies show that people in situations of violence face difficulties, obstacles that characterize a path of comings and goings, circular paths covered over and over without solutions and, especially, energy spent, which leads to emotional stress and to the recurrent feeling of being victimized. This process is called critical route (PAHO, 1998)<sup>35</sup>.

The effectiveness of actions of prevention and reduction of household and sexual violence depends on joint of public and community funds and on the involvement of the State and of society as a whole. It is necessary to involve the three branches of power, the social movements, and the community, each of them with its competences and responsibilities, establishing a network of care and protection.

It is an attribute of the State to adopt a systematic and continuous policy in different areas. Its intervention must be characterized by the promotion and implementation of public policies of accountability of the federal, state and local governments, establishing a network of actions and services.

The networks must articulate legal and social assistance, health services, public security, education and labour authorities. The services and organizations that make up the networks include: Specialised Superintendencies for Assistance to Women, ordinary police precincts, Centres of Reference, Public Defence Offices for Women, Forensic Medicine Institutes, Health Services, the Police, Fire Squads and Shelters for Battered Women.

The policy of facing up to violence against women has been a priority of the Special Secretariat for Policies for Women, which has been working in the promotion of care for women, training and qualifying professionals and providing access to justice.

In the area of health, Law Number 10.778, of November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003, establishes the mandatory notification all over the national territory of cases of violence against women cared for in public or private health services. It is an achievement of women's movements and an important step towards the focus of the problem of violence against women in Brazil. It is also worth highlighting the implementation of assistance services for women who are victims of sexual violence, which include services ranging from emergency contraception to the guarantee of a legal abortion. These services are insufficient to meet the needs of the

population, and they are concentrated in state capitals, particularly in the South of the country. The implementation of these services is deemed an advance because they are a means of enforcing a right provided for by law since 1940.<sup>36</sup>

In public security, the inclusion of a subject in the curricula of Police Academies which discusses gender inequality and its consequences for women and men provides security professionals with a new understanding of gender-related violence. Within this trend the inclusion of resources in the PPA for the National Secretariat for Public Safety for organizations that assist women in situations of violence is also to be highlighted.

The formulation of standards for the Specialised Police Stations for Assistance to Women (DEAM) is important in order to professionally credit and recognise employees within the corporation itself and vis-à-vis society at large, allowing for greater satisfaction at work and for greater development of the functions.

Regarding international agreements, for the first time the Brazilian State reported to the CEDAW Committee (UN) on the progress achieved and on the difficulties to be overcome. The Brazilian Government has also pledged to support the creation of a Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism to follow the enforcement of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará).

In response to the demands of the women's movement, the SPM has created an inter-ministerial group to evaluate, study and propose a bill of law on household violence against women, referred to the National Congress on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The idea is to create a specific procedure within Law Number 9.099/95 for cases of household violence against women, creating at the same time specialized courts to deal with all kinds of violence.

During the last decades, according to the balance of power prevailing at each moment and in each region, women's and feminist movements have exercised pressure on the State to take up its role in facing violence against women. Thus, there came to being in the 1980s the DEAMs, the area of health incorporated gender violence to its agenda and protection and assistance services have been more frequently established, to assist women who live in situations of violence, such as Shelters for Battered Women and Hospital Centres of Reference.

The result of this process brought to light the heterogeneity prevailing all over the national territory, both from the conceptual and from the quantitative points of view, within the range of services delivered in this area, both in terms of prevention and of care.

Thus, in spite of the progress achieved, there remain major challenges. It is time to achieve a new stage in this struggle through the implementation of a National Policy to Face Violence against Women that may articulate spheres and levels of power and that, at the same time, may work towards the integration of services, basing on a single conceptual framework.

## Objectives, targets, priorities and plan of action

### Objectives

- I. To establish a National Policy to Face Violence against Women.
- II. To ensure full, humanized and quality care to women in situations of violence.

III. To reduce the rates of violence against women.

IV. To ensure compliance with the international instruments and review the Brazilian legislation on facong to violence against women.

## Targets

A. To carry out a quantitative and qualitative diagnosis of the services of prevention and care delivered to women in situations of violence all over the national territory.

B. To define the enforcement of national technical standards for the operation of the services of prevention and care.

C. To integrate the services into local, regional and national networks.

D. To establish networks of care for women in situations of violence in all Brazilian States, encompassing the following services: Specialized Police Precincts to Assist Women, Military Police and Mobile Units of the Fire Squad, Centre of Reference, Shelters for Battered Women, Health Services, Institute of Forensic Medicine, of the Public Prosecutor, Office of the Public Prosecutor for Women, and social programmes related to employment, housing, education, culture and justice, Councils and Social Movements.

E. To establish specialized services to assist women in situations of violence in all Brazilian States and in the Federal District pursuant the diagnosis carried out and the statistics available on violence in each region.

F. To increase by 15% the services of assistance to women's health in situations of violence.

G. To establish a National Information System on violence against women.

H. To establish a process of training and coaching for professionals who work in the services of prevention and care, according to the integrated model developed by the MS/SEPPIR/SPM and the SENASP in all States of the country, with special emphasis in the cities with higher rates of violence against women.

I. To expand by 50% the Number of Specialized Police Stations for Assistance to Women and to put in place Specialized Centres in the already existing Stations.

## Priorities

4.1. To expand and improve the Network of Prevention and Care that serves women in situations of violence.

4.2. To review and implement the national legislation and ensure the enforcement of international treaties ratified, with a view at improving the mechanisms of combat to violence against women.

4.3. To promote preventive actions vis-à-vis household and sexual violence.

4.4. To promote health-care services for women in situations of household and sexual violence.

4.5. To produce and systematise data and information on violence against women.

4.6. To train professionals of the areas of public security, health, education and psycho-social assistance on the subject of gender-related violence.

4.7. To expand access to justice and to free legal assistance.