

# **COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

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### **CSW42 AGREED CONCLUSIONS (I)**

United Nations, March 1998

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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## *The Commission on the Status of Women*

*Reaffirms* the Beijing Platform for Action, notably chapter IV.D on violence against women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women,

*Requests* States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to take into account in their initial and periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, general recommendation 19 on violence against women, adopted by the Committee at its eleventh session, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women,

*Requests* States parties to international human rights treaties to compile information and report on the extent and manifestations of violence against women, including domestic violence and harmful traditional practices, and the measures taken to eliminate such violence, for inclusion in reports under the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and to include such information in reports to other treaty bodies,

*Proposes*, in order to accelerate the implementation of the strategic objectives of chapter IV.D:

- Call upon the international community to condemn and act against all forms and manifestations of terrorism, in particular those that affect women and children;
- Develop strong and effective national, regional and international cooperation to prevent and eliminate trafficking in women and girls, especially for purposes of economic and sexual exploitation, including the exploitation of prostitution of women and girls;
- Encourage the media to take measures against the projection of images of violence against women and children;
- Strengthen effective partnerships with non-governmental organizations and all relevant agencies to promote an integrated and holistic approach to the elimination of violence against women and girls;
- Integrate effective actions to end violence against women into all areas of public and private life, as a means of working to overcome the violence and discrimination that women face because of such factors as race, language, ethnicity, poverty, culture, religion, age, disability and socio-economic class or because they are indigenous people, migrants, including women migrant workers, displaced women or refugees;
- Ensure that comprehensive programmes for the rehabilitation of victims of rape are integrated into global programmes.

## A. An integrated, holistic approach

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### **Actions to be taken by Governments and the international community:**

- Formulate comprehensive and multidisciplinary and coordinated national plans, programmes or strategies, which will be widely disseminated, to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and provide for targets, timetables for implementation and effective domestic enforcement procedures by monitoring mechanisms, involving all parties concerned, including consultations with women's organizations;

## B. Provision of resources to combat violence against all women

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### **Actions to be taken by Governments, non-governmental organizations and the public and private sector, as appropriate:**

- Support the work of non-governmental organizations in their activities to prevent, combat and eliminate violence against women;
- Provide adequate resources for women's groups, helplines, crisis centres and other support services,

including credit, medical, psychological and other counselling services, as well as focus on vocational skill training for women victims of violence that enables them to find a means of subsistence;

- Provide resources for the strengthening of legal mechanisms for prosecuting those who commit acts of violence against women and girls, and for the rehabilitation of victims;
- Support and encourage partnerships for the establishment of national networks and provide resources for shelters and relief support for women and girls, so as to offer a safe, sensitive and integrated response to women victims of violence, including the provision of programmes designed to heal victims of trafficking and rehabilitate them into society;
- Consider increasing contributions for national, regional and international action to combat violence against women, including for the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences and the Trust Fund in Support of Action to Eliminate Violence against Women of the United Nations Development Fund for Women;
- Develop special programmes that would assist women and girls with disabilities in recognizing and reporting acts of violence, including the provision of accessible support services for their protection and safety;
- Encourage and fund the training of personnel in the administration of justice, law enforcement agencies, security, social and health-care services, schools and migration authorities on matters related to gender-based violence, and its prevention, and the protection of women from violence;
- Include in national budgets adequate resources related to the elimination of violence against women and girls.

## C. Creation of linkages and cooperation with regard to particular forms of violence against women

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### Actions to be taken by Governments:

- Consider, where appropriate, formulating bilateral, subregional and regional agreements to promote and protect the rights of migrant workers, especially women and girls;
- Develop bilateral, subregional, regional and international agreements and protocols to combat all forms of trafficking in women and girls, and assist victims of violence resulting from prostitution and trafficking;
- Improve international information exchange on trafficking in women and girls by recommending the setting up of a data-collection centre within Interpol, regional law enforcement agencies and national police forces, as appropriate;
- Strengthen the implementation of all relevant human rights instruments in order to eliminate organized and other forms of trafficking in women and girls, including trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and of pornography;
- Strengthen gender focal points of the regional commissions, and further enhance their contributions to gender-balanced development policies, as they have already made significant contributions by helping member States to build capacities and as regards gender-mainstreaming for alleviating gender-based violence against women, and have contributed actively to promoting the human rights of women.

## D. Legal measures

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### Actions to be taken by Governments:

- Ensure the gender-sensitive development of an integrated framework that includes criminal, civil, evidentiary and procedural provisions and that

addresses sufficiently the multiple forms of violence against women;

- Take all appropriate measures to develop an integrated and comprehensive legislative framework that addresses sufficiently the multiple forms of violence against women;
- Promote, where necessary, the harmonization of local legislation that penalizes acts of violence against women;
- Provide adequate infrastructure and support services to respond to the needs of the survivors of violence against women and girls, and to assist towards full recovery and reintegration into society, such as witness protection programmes, restraining order against perpetrators, crisis centres, telephone hotlines, shelters, provisions for economic support and livelihood assistance;
- Develop guidelines to ensure appropriate police and prosecutorial responses in cases of violence against women;
- Establish and support programmes that provide legal aid and assistance for women and girls bringing complaints relating to gender-based violence through various applicable ways and means, such as non governmental organization support for women with claims relating to violence against women;
- Ensure the accountability of relevant law enforcement agencies for implementation of policies to protect women from gender-based violence;
- Investigate, and in accordance with national legislation, punish all acts of violence against women and girls, including those perpetrated by public officials;
- Implement strategies and practical measures, taking account of the Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice adopted by the General Assembly, in its resolution 52/86 of 12 December 1997, and contained in the annex thereto;

- Review national legislation in order to effect complete legal prohibition of rape and all forms of violence against women and girls, such as domestic violence, including rape, and to ensure that legislation that protects women and girls from violence is effectively implemented;
- Criminalize all forms of trafficking in women and girls for the purposes of sexual exploitation and penalize all traffickers;
- Take steps to enable women who are victims of trafficking to make complaints to the police and to be available when required by the criminal justice system, and ensure that during this time women have access to social, medical, financial and legal assistance, and protection, as appropriate;
- Develop and implement national legislation and policies prohibiting harmful customary or traditional practices that are violations of women's and girls' human rights and obstacles to the full enjoyment by women and girls of their human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Ensure that women are safe at work by supporting measures that promote the creation of a workplace environment free from sexual harassment or other violence and encourage all employers to put in place policies designed to eliminate and deal effectively with harassment of women whenever it occurs in the workplace;
- Encourage the participation of women in law enforcement agencies so as to achieve gender balance.

## E. Research and gender-disaggregated data collection

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### Actions to be taken by Governments:

- Promote coordinated research on violence against women to ensure that it is multidisciplinary and addresses the root factors, including external factors, that encourage trafficking in women and girls for prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation;

- Encourage research aimed at exploring the nature, extent and causes of violence and collect data and statistics on its economic and social costs, and its consequences, and conduct research on the impact of all laws relevant to combating all forms of violence against women;
- Develop common definitions and guidelines and train relevant actors for the collection of data and statistics on violence against women and ensure that all cases of violence against women are recorded systematically and appropriately, whether they are first reported to the police or to health and social services;
- Sponsor community-based research and national surveys, including the collection of disaggregated data, on violence against women, with regard to particular groups of women, such as women with disabilities, migrant women workers and trafficked women;
- Support evaluations of the impact of measures and policies, particularly with regard to legislative, evidentiary and procedural law reform, to address violence against women with a view to identifying and exchanging good practices and lessons learned, and initiate intervention and prevention programmes;
- Promote the sharing of research results, including information on best practices at national, regional and international levels;
- Explore the possibility of mechanisms such as national rapporteurs, who report to Governments on the scale, prevention and combating of violence against women, particularly trafficking in women and girls.

#### **Action to be taken by the United Nations:**

- Consider ways to share good practices and lessons learned, including establishing a readily accessible database of good practices and lessons learned with regard to all forms of violence against women.

## **F. Change attitudes**

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### **Actions to be taken by Governments and civil society, including non governmental organizations:**

- Work to create violence-free societies by implementing participatory educational programmes on human rights, conflict resolution and gender equality, for women and men of all ages, beginning with girls and boys;
- Support programmes of peer mediation and conflict resolution for schoolchildren and special training for teachers to equip them to encourage cooperation and respect for diversity and gender;
- Encourage innovative education and training in schools to enhance awareness of gender-based violence by promoting non-violent conflict resolution, and short- and mid- and long-term strategic educational goals for achieving gender equality;
- Introduce and invest in comprehensive public awareness campaigns, such as "zero tolerance", that portray violence against women as unacceptable;
- Encourage the promotion in media portrayals of positive images of women and of men, presenting them as cooperative and full partners in the upbringing of their children, and discourage the media from presenting negative images of women and girls;
- Encourage the media to create positive images of women and men as cooperative and crucial actors in preventing violence against women through the development of voluntary international media codes of conduct, on positive images, portrayals and representations of women, and on the coverage of the reporting of violence against women;
- Raise awareness and mobilize public opinion to eliminate female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional, cultural or customary practices that violate the human rights of women and girls and negatively affect their health;

- Promote the responsible use of new information technologies, in particular the Internet, including the encouraging of steps to prevent the use of these technologies for discrimination and violence against women, and for trafficking in women for the purposes of sexual exploitation, including the exploitation of prostitution of women and girls;
- Create policies and programmes to encourage behavioural change in perpetrators of violence against women, including rape, and monitor and assess the impact and effect of such programmes;
- Establish legal literacy programmes to make women aware of their rights and the methods of seeking protection under the law;
- Recognize that women and girls with disabilities, women migrants and refugee women and girls could be particularly affected by violence, and encourage the development of programmes for their support;
- Encourage campaigns aimed at clarifying opportunities, limitations and rights in the event of migration so as to enable women to make informed decisions and to prevent them from becoming victims of trafficking;
- Encourage and support men's own initiatives to complement efforts of women's organizations to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls;
- Conduct research on, and create policies and programmes to change, the attitudes and behaviour of perpetrators of violence against women within family and society;
- Actively encourage, support and implement measures aimed at increasing the knowledge and understanding of violence against women, through gender analysis capacity-building and gender-sensitive training for law enforcement officers, police personnel, the judiciary, medical and social workers, and teachers. ■

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