



Permanent Mission
of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the United Nations
New York

Statement

by

**Permanent Representative
of the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of
Germany**

H.E. Ambassador Peter Wittig

**On the occasion of the 57th session of the Commission
on the Advancement of Women**

New York

March 2013

(check against delivery)

Dear Madam Chairperson, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for the well prepared 57th session of the CSW. Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

As the Secretary General has pointed out in his recent reports, violence against women occurs in all countries, contexts and settings and is one of the most pervasive violations of human rights. According to the Secretary General, as many as 7 in 10 women in the world report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime.

Regarding the situation in Germany, research indicates that 40% of women have suffered physical or sexual violence after their sixteenth birthday. One in four women has suffered intimate partner violence, and 58% sexual harassment. Women with disabilities show an even higher prevalence of violence as compared to the general female population. These alarming figures have led to two Federal Action Plans and corresponding action plans on all administrative levels.

In order to successfully fight gender based violence it is crucial to exchange knowledge and adapt successful measures to the specific situations in the various countries. Violence against women can only be eliminated in the long-run if it is part of a gender equality approach and a human rights policy, which also contains the right to health, including equal access to health services.

On a regional level, the Council of Europe opened the "Convention to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence" for signature in May 2011. This Convention sets a milestone in providing us with a comprehensive human rights based and victims' rights centered instrument. Germany was one of the first states to sign this Convention and we are now implementing the provisions in order to be able to ratify.

Let me name just the most recent outstanding projects:

- In August 2012 the Federal Government published the first report on the situation of the support system for women affected by violence and their children. This report is a stocktaking of the situation and will be the basis for emerging discussions for the enhancement of the support system;
- In December 2012 Germany set up a National Action Plan for the coordinated implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security;
- On March 6th the national telephone help-line "violence against women" went operative. It provides anonymous and confidential initial counseling for women affected by violence and their social environment. The number is toll free and operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The counselors are trained staff. The telephone line is multilingual and barrier free. If needed, callers can be referred to the local support system.

In addition, we acknowledge that violence against women is one of the most widespread human rights violations in Germany's development cooperation countries. Therefore, Germany supports cooperation between governmental, non-governmental and private sector stakeholders in its development cooperation activities aimed at combating gender-based violence. Furthermore, Germany supports

initiatives that focus on psychological rehabilitation of survivors of sexual violence, their empowerment and access to justice, as well as awareness raising and promotion of human rights.

But regional and national action alone is not enough to counter this human rights violation which affects so many women around the world. We need a change of mind-set and the political will to make the fight against violence against women and girls a priority.

We are convinced it is of utmost importance that the United Nations continues its action against violence against women and girls, which has already been one of the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform of Action.

Therefore, Germany fully supports the Secretary General's Campaign UNiTE to end violence against women.

I look forward to this CSW and I am confident that at the end of these two weeks we will have a powerful outcome document on this well-chosen priority theme.

Thank you very much for your attention.