

**Commission on the Status of Women
57th Session**

Priority Theme:

“The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls”

Joint Statement of the United Nations Regional Commissions

**Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)
Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Madam Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to present to you this joint statement on behalf of the five UN Regional Commissions, namely ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA.

The Regional Commissions welcome the focus of this session of the Commission on the Status of Women on "elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls".

Violence against women and girls is a global development issue that requires collective and bold responses. It is one of the most pervasive human rights violations, and affects women and girls in every country, regardless of culture and context. It has also important socio-economic costs impeding countries' growth prospects and development. While the past year has been haunted by headlines of brutal attacks on women and girls, innumerable incidents of violence suffered by women and girls, at homes and in public spaces, have gone unnoticed. Women and girls continue to live under a constant threat of violence.

Ending violence is about changing unequal power relations between women and men, and ensuring full and equal participation of women and girls in all aspects of society. Efforts to prevent and respond to such violence should be systematic, holistic and coordinated across all sectors.

As the regional arm of the UN secretariat, the Regional Commissions provide a critical platform to support governments to evaluate regional trends, share national experiences, identify priorities, and translate global commitments into policy responses that effectively address national challenges and, most importantly, the needs of women and girls living under threat of violence. They serve as hubs for

cross-country learning and as channels through which to inform global dialogue and decision-making with ground realities and regional experiences.

The five Regional Commissions had jointly implemented an interregional project entitled "Enhancing capacities to eradicate violence against women", which was coordinated by ECLAC in cooperation with the United Nations Statistical Division and UN Women. It represented a major international effort to eliminate gender-based violence by understanding its magnitude, forms and consequences. The project involved over 30 countries from all five regions through consultation and training for implementation of its VAW survey module, and enhanced statistical data and indicators of violence against women, as well as knowledge-sharing at the regional and global levels.

In advance of this year's global dialogue, and in close collaboration with UN Women and other regional bodies, ECA, ECLAC and ESCAP have supported the regional consultations leading up to this session of CSW. The Regional Commissions have also undertaken specific initiatives to address violence against women and girls within their own contexts.

In Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has been actively supporting member States in implementing the Secretary General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign through advocacy, awareness raising and capacity development, in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. Addressing violence against women and girls has been integrated, as a priority issue, into the institutional capacity building programme ESCAP has developed for National Women's Machineries in the region. In February, ESCAP and UN Women jointly organized a regional preparatory meeting for the 57th session of the CSW. At this meeting, member States had in-depth discussions on national and regional experience, and identified priorities and common strategies towards achieving the goal of preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. The outcomes of their discussions highlighted not only country-specific dynamics and needs, but also common challenges, particularly in addressing gender inequalities and structural drivers at the root of violence against women and girls in all societies.

In Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has undertaken a number of empirical studies on violence against women to provide its member states with accurate data essential to the formulation and effective implementation of appropriate policy responses and programming. These include a comprehensive situation analysis of violence against women in all African countries; an empirical study on violence against women in 8 countries. In addition, ECA has dedicated its African Women Report 2013 to "Violence against women in Africa: Assessing the Socio-Economic Costs and Policy Implications". The Report will be published and launched in partnership with UN Women towards the end of the year. It will provide member States with evidence on the extent to which VAW hampers the continent development processes and articulate action-oriented policy measures. In the Pre-

CSW Consultation led by ECA and UN WOMEN on 14-16 January 2013 in Addis Ababa, the African Member States adopted a Declaration, committing themselves among others to ensure that the elimination of violence against women and girls is a priority area of the post-2015 agenda with clear targets and indicators. The Africa Unite Campaign chaired by UN WOMEN, ECA, UNFPA and the African Union Commission (AUC) has harnessed member States' political will to take concrete actions to end VAW. The Campaign was organized in March 2012 at Mount Kilimanjaro Climb, and mobilized 74 representatives from governments, CSOs, Media and 14 UN agencies in raising awareness to ending VAW in Africa. A large number of African National Machineries are putting violence against women at the forefront of their programming. They used the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children as a critical milestone to strengthen their partnership with national CSOs to sustain and take further their collective intervention to tackle VAW.

Preventing and eliminating violence against women has received considerable attention throughout the UNECE region, with many governments strengthening their legislation, especially with respect to domestic violence and trafficking. The effective implementation of legislation, in particular, the coordination and cooperation between social services, health workers and police remains a key challenge. Economic empowerment of women is an important tool to reduce economic constraints, enable women to lead a more self-determined life and avoid or escape from situations of violence. UNECE continues to work with government institutions, women's associations, academia and entrepreneurs from the region by providing a platform for policy dialogue and exchange of knowledge and best practices on the economic empowerment of women as a means to combat violence against women. The Third UNECE Forum of Women Entrepreneurs, which took place in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 14-15 November 2012, discussed access to finance, education and knowledge, including on how to set up and expand innovation-based enterprises, social enterprises and networking. The discussion on issues related to domestic violence and entrepreneurship as a means of women's economic independence was carried on in the biannual training workshops for women entrepreneurs from Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia.

In Latin America, the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and its Presiding Officers Meetings, convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), have played an important role in the construction of regional consensus around the attainment of women's autonomy, including physical, economic and in decision making. Both the Brasilia Consensus (2010) and the Presiding Officers Meetings Agreements reinforced the commitment to eliminate violence against women and girls and the need for improved data. In response, the Observatory for Gender Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean has maintained a database on violence against women, including a repository of laws on this issue. The Observatory generated an indicator on women's deaths caused by their partner or former partner, contributing to the visibility of this extreme form of violence. The Observatory has also provided technical assistance in data harmonization, working with the judiciary and national public prosecutors.

Furthermore, ECLAC and UNFPA, in collaboration with UN Women, have developed a regional training programme on women, peace and security.

In Western Asia, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) continues to support Member Countries to address violence against women and girls through initiatives that aim to strengthen the capacities of national women's machineries, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Through the provision of technical assistance and advisory services, ESCWA assists countries in the region to ultimately put forward targeted strategies to combat gender based violence and be able to empirically assess and measure violence against women. In addition, ESCWA continuously monitors and analyzes the effectiveness of legislations, policies, and programmes that are central to the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women, especially in the context of armed conflict and occupation. ESCWA is currently engaged, in collaboration with UN Women and regional NGOs, in various policy related studies which examine specific forms of violence, including trafficking, and evaluate the protection, prevention, and rehabilitation services provided by governmental institutions and civil society organizations to female survivors of violence. Furthermore, ESCWA is periodically providing Member States with advisory and capacity building support to assist them in drafting action plans to facilitate the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security.

In conclusion, Madam Chair,

The Regional Commissions reiterate their commitment to working in close partnership, complementarity and coherence at the regional level with UN Women and other agencies to ensure that the UN System delivers on the collective global promise to prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls.

As mandated by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Regional Commissions will continue to support Member States in monitoring the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.