

United Nations  Nations Unies

Aide Mémoire

**Expert Group Meeting  
on indicators to measure violence against women**

*Co-organized by UNECE, UNDAW and UNSD, in collaboration with ECLAC,  
ESCWA, ESCAP, and ECA*

*Hosted by the Conference of European Statisticians Task Force  
on violence against women*

*Geneva, 8-10 October 2007*

**I. Background**

On 19 December 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted without a vote a resolution entitled “Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women” (A/RES/61/143). The resolution requested:

- ◆ *the Statistical Commission* to develop and propose, in consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women, and building on the work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, a set of possible indicators on violence against women in order to assist States in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women;
- ◆ *the Secretary-General* to establish a coordinated database, containing data provided by States, in particular national statistical offices, including, where appropriate, through relevant United Nations entities and other relevant regional intergovernmental organizations, disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant information, on the extent, nature and consequences of all forms of violence against women, and on the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes for, including best practices in, combating such violence.

This mandate provided by the General Assembly responds to the increasing demand for indicators on violence against women. Some stakeholders have argued that the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals should include indicators on violence against women (Millennium Project, WHO, Walby<sup>1</sup>). Based on a mandate by the Commission on Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences has initiated work toward the development of a set of indicators with a particular focus on measuring State responses to combat violence against women.

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<sup>1</sup> Walby Sylvia, *Violence against women and the Millennium Development Goals*, paper presented at the consultation on “Galvanizing action to combat violence against women”, Division for the Advancement of Women 6-7 September 2005.

Indicators to measure violence against women have been suggested by different actors, including governmental actors (such as the European Union, Statistics Canada, US Centers for Disease Control-National Center for Inquiry Prevention and Control, and the United Kingdom), non-governmental actors (such as the European Women's Lobby) and entities of the United Nations system (UNECLAC, UNHCR, Secretary-General's study)<sup>2</sup>. These proposals include indicators that cover the following areas:

- ◆ types of outcome (prevalence, severity and impact, incidents)
- ◆ risk factors
- ◆ victim support
- ◆ public attitudes and perceptions
- ◆ measures to end violence against women

The Expert Group Meeting on *Violence against women: a statistical overview, challenges and gaps in data collection and methodology and approaches for overcoming them* (Geneva, 11-14 April 2005), discussed existing proposals on indicators, but did not elaborate specific recommendations or support existing options. Rather, the Expert Group Meeting noted that “indicators had played an important role in the development of gender equality policies in various fields. Indicators on violence against women enhance the capacity to evaluate policies by making it possible to provide hard data on whether or not violence has increased or decreased as a result of their implementation”.<sup>3</sup>

In order to support the work of the Statistical Commission, in consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women, to develop a set of indicators as requested by the United Nations General Assembly, there is the need to take stock of the existing work and assess its scope and relevance for measuring violence against women. Based on such a stocktaking exercise, options and recommendations for next steps and future work should be developed, for consideration by and in support of the work of the Statistical Commission in consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women. Such options should focus on indicators that specifically aim to assess the “the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women.” The Special Rapporteur is working on a set of indicators with a particular focus on measuring State responses to combat violence against women, and such indicators are crucial for tracking progress in addressing all forms of violence against women. The Statistical Commission, on the other hand, has the opportunity to develop indicators that can be measured through official statistics on the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women, thereby enhancing the role and contribution of national statistical offices in a crucial area of gender equality.

The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) has established a task force whose objectives include the definition of common concepts and the development of a core set of indicators to measure violence against women. The task force is composed of experts from national statistical offices, academia and international organizations, and has already carried out a review of existing surveys to measure violence against

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<sup>2</sup> Walby Sylvia, *Developing Indicators on Violence Against Women*

<sup>3</sup> Report of the Expert Group Meeting on *Violence against women: a statistical overview, challenges and gaps in data collection and methodology and approaches for overcoming them* (UNDAW in collaboration with UNECE and WHO, Geneva, 11-14 April 2005). Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw-stat-2005/index.html>.

women in CES countries<sup>4</sup>. Relevant initiatives have also been implemented by several other regional commissions. This expertise and experience should be fully utilized in supporting future work of global intergovernmental bodies in this area.

## **II. Objectives of the Expert Group Meeting**

The main objectives of the meeting are to:

- ◆ take stock of existing major national, regional and international initiatives aimed at developing indicators on violence against women;
- ◆ assess advantages and disadvantages of various indicator proposals;
- ◆ develop criteria for the identification of a possible set of indicators on violence against women;
- ◆ summarize options, and put forward recommendations for a possible set of indicators to support countries to measure the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women;
- ◆ outline related data collection requirements and constraints, as well as opportunities for overcoming these, taking into consideration users' needs.

The meeting will also consider the types of violence that should be covered in a possible set of indicators and propose an approach for defining a technical description of each possible indicator.

## **III. Expected outcome**

The expert group meeting will prepare a report that will:

- give an overview of existing initiatives for the development of indicators
- prepare options for a possible set of indicators on violence against women

The report will serve as input to the work of the Statistical Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women in relation to the mandate of the General Assembly. It will also contribute to the compilation of data and information on all forms and manifestations of violence against women for inclusion in the coordinated database to be established by the Secretary-General.

## **IV. Method of work**

Invited experts will be asked to present papers on specific topics, to be proposed by the co-organizers. These papers will highlight issues related to the definition and measurement of violence against women, and recommendations for action.

The CES task force will present a background paper which will include an overview of existing initiatives on indicators to measure violence against women, and propose criteria for the identification of a possible set of indicators on violence against women. It will also suggest a framework for measuring violence against women.

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<sup>4</sup> *Analysis of national surveys carried out by the countries of the conference of European Statisticians to measure violence against women.* Available at:  
<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.30/2006/6.e.pdf>.

Together with experts' papers and discussions, the background paper will serve as basis for the meeting's report and recommendations.

## **V. Profile of participants**

The expert group meeting will be attended by approximately 15 experts from all parts of the world in the field of data collection and indicators on violence against women, including staff of national statistical offices, government officials, experts from international organizations, researchers and academics with extensive expertise in measuring violence against women

Staff from the Statistical Division of ECE and the Division for the Advancement of Women will support the meeting.

The Division for the Advancement of Women will provide travel, accommodation and daily subsistence allowance for a selected number of invited experts.

A small number of observers may also attend.

## **VI. Documentation**

The documentation for the meeting will include the papers prepared by the CES task force and other experts. Papers will be available on the websites of ECE and DAW. The expert group meeting will be conducted in English only.

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