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Expert Group Meeting on indicators to measure violence against women

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CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING INDICATORS ON VAW

Supporting Paper

Submitted by OHCHR*

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has initiated work on statistical information and other indicators for use to promote and monitor the implementation of human rights, at the request of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies. Accordingly, a conceptual and methodological framework has been developed by OHCHR in consultation with a panel of experts, involving members of Treaty Bodies, UN Special Rapporteurs, UN agencies, academics and NGOs.¹

In the context of this expert group meeting on indicators to measure violence against women (VAW), our contribution outlines on the possible criteria for identifying indicators on VAW, from a conceptual rather than a methodological point, with a view to narrow down the focus for the selection of indicators. As indicated in the background note prepared for the meeting, this identification should be supported by the use of rigorous and transparent criteria. The considerations and criteria highlighted in this note are based on the international human rights normative framework as applicable to the issue of violence against women and the conceptual and methodological framework adopted by OHCHR in its work on indicators.

Criteria for identifying indicators on VAW

General definitional criteria

- Indicator should relate to ‘gender-based violence’, namely violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman, or violence that affect women disproportionately (see general recommendation No. 19 of CEDAW committee);

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¹ An outline of the approach is provided in the OHCHR report submitted to Inter-Committee Meeting of the Treaty Bodies in June 2006 (HRI/MC/2006/7) available at <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/icm-mc/documents.htm>

- Indicator should relate to any act that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (see Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women);²
- While it may be difficult to altogether segregate the implication of discrimination as against violence directed at women on their well-being, the selection of indicators in the context of this work should be confined to information on situations and episodes that are predominantly related to the latter.

Main characteristics attributes/manifestations of violence against women

In order to have a logical and comprehensive basis of selecting indicators on the issue of VAW, it may be desirable to outline an approach that responds to the various concerns identified in the resolution, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the relevant human rights normative framework. One such approach that integrates what can be described as a “woman life-cycle” perspective and a “perpetrator of gender-based-violence” perspective is outlined here. Attempt has been made to identify some indicators as illustration:

	Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family	Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community	Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State
Sexual and reproductive health	<i>e.g. incidence of foetal sex determination</i> <i>e.g. prevalence of physical or sexual violence perpetrated by intimate partner during pregnancy</i> <i>e.g. incidence of sexual abuse on female children</i>	<i>e.g. incidence of female genital mutilation</i> <i>e.g. prevalence of rape perpetrated by non-partners</i>	<i>e.g. incidence of forced sterilization</i>
Education and empowerment	<i>e.g. incidence of preference for sons' access to education</i>	<i>e.g. proportion of girls in the school-going-age group not enrolled in school</i>	<i>e.g. incidence of sexual harassment by teaching staff in education institutions</i>
Work opportunities and conditions of work	<i>e.g. incidence of violence against domestic workers</i>	<i>e.g. incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace</i> <i>e.g. incidence of women trafficking</i>	<i>e.g. date of entry into force of legal framework for promoting and protecting equal treatment of women in work and inheritance</i>
Participation and decision-making	<i>e.g. proportion of women having “a say” in decision making in the household</i> <i>e.g. incidence of dowry related violence</i>	<i>e.g. proportion of forced marriages</i>	<i>e.g. incidence of physical or sexual violence perpetrated by state agents (e.g. police, custodial staff, immigration officials)</i>

Measurement of commitment, efforts and results aspects

² Difficulties in measuring psychological violence should not exclude the identification and compilation of indicators on this aspect, notably at a national level. From a methodological point of view (including for comparability over-time and regions), we may concentrate at this stage on measuring aspects of physical and sexual violence.

In accordance with the GA resolution on the “Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women”, the work initiated by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, which has a particular focus on measuring State responses to combat violence against women, it may be desirable to identify indicators that reflect the human rights obligations of the State in the elimination of VAW. In this regard, following the OHCHR approach, it will be helpful to look at indicators or set of indicators that capture aspects of States’ *commitment, efforts* and *results* of these efforts in the elimination of violence against women. More specifically, there is need to identify indicators in relation to the following three clusters:

- Indicators measuring commitments (structural indicators) should reflect the ratification and adoption of legal instruments and existence of basic institutional mechanisms deemed necessary for facilitating elimination of violence against women (e.g. number of international treaties relevant to the elimination of violence against women, ratified by a country; date of entry into force of domestic laws relevant to the elimination of violence against women);
- Indicators measuring efforts (process indicators) should refer to measures, including public programmes, services and specific interventions that are implemented to give effect to commitments for eliminating violence against women (e.g. proportion of victims accessing appropriate assistance services; number of person arrested, adjudicated, convicted or serving sentence for violence against women per 100,000 population);
- Indicators measuring results (outcome indicators) should capture attainments and results that reflect the status of realisation of the elimination of violence against women (e.g. prevalence and incidence indicators on physical, sexual and psychological violence against women; proportion of female murder victims killed by their husbands, partners or former partners)

Disaggregation requirements

Indicators, as applicable and feasible, should be disaggregated at relevant levels. Disaggregation by age, regions or administrative units will generally be feasible and constitute a necessary basis of information. The availability of disaggregated data on some groups of women, such as women belonging to ethnic groups, indigenous women, refugee women, migrant women, women living in rural or remote communities, women in institutions or in detention, female children, women with disabilities, elderly women may also be desirable. The identification of some groups, such as ethnic groups will however involve objective criteria (e.g. language) and subjective criteria (e.g. self-identity) that may evolve over time and raise sensitive issues. The production of any statistical data has implications for the right to privacy, data protection and confidentiality issues, and will, therefore, require appropriate legal, ethical and institutional standards.
