

III. Violence against women

45. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*

The General Assembly,

Recognizing the urgent need for the universal application to women of the rights and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity of all human beings,

Noting that those rights and principles are enshrined in international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,¹ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,² the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,² the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women³ and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,⁴

Recognizing that effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women would contribute to the elimination of violence against women and that the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, set forth in the present resolution, will strengthen and complement that process,

Concerned that violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace, as recognized in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women,⁵ in which a set of measures to combat violence against women was recommended, and to the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

*General Assembly resolution 48/104.

¹Resolution 217 A (III).

²See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

³Resolution 34/180, annex.

⁴Resolution 39/46, annex.

⁵*Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

Affirming that violence against women constitutes a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and impairs or nullifies their enjoyment of those rights and freedoms, and concerned about the long-standing failure to protect and promote those rights and freedoms in the case of violence against women,

Recognizing that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men,

Concerned that some groups of women, such as women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, refugee women, migrant women, women living in rural or remote communities, destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, female children, women with disabilities, elderly women and women in situations of armed conflict, are especially vulnerable to violence,

Recalling the conclusion in paragraph 23 of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15 of 24 May 1990 that the recognition that violence against women in the family and society was pervasive and cut across lines of income, class and culture had to be matched by urgent and effective steps to eliminate its incidence,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/18 of 30 May 1991, in which the Council recommended the development of a framework for an international instrument that would address explicitly the issue of violence against women,

Welcoming the role that women's movements are playing in drawing increasing attention to the nature, severity and magnitude of the problem of violence against women,

Alarmed that opportunities for women to achieve legal, social, political and economic equality in society are limited, inter alia, by continuing and endemic violence,

Convinced that in the light of the above there is a need for a clear and comprehensive definition of violence against women, a clear statement of the rights to be applied to ensure the elimination of violence against women in all its forms, a commitment by States in respect of their responsibilities, and a commitment by the international community at large to the elimination of violence against women,

Solemnly proclaims the following Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and urges that every effort be made so that it becomes generally known and respected:

Article 1

For the purposes of this Declaration, the term “violence against women” means any act of gender-based violence 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 in private life.

Article 2

Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

(b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;

(c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

Article 3

Women are entitled to the equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. These rights include, inter alia:

(a) The right to life;⁶

(b) The right to equality;⁷

⁶Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 3; and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 6.

⁷International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 26.

- (c) The right to liberty and security of person;⁸
- (d) The right to equal protection under the law;⁷
- (e) The right to be free from all forms of discrimination;⁷
- (f) The right to the highest standard attainable of physical and mental health;⁹
- (g) The right to just and favourable conditions of work;¹⁰
- (h) The right not to be subjected to torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.¹¹

Article 4

States should condemn violence against women and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination. States should pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence against women and, to this end, should:

- (a) Consider, where they have not yet done so, ratifying or acceding to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or withdrawing reservations to that Convention;
- (b) Refrain from engaging in violence against women;
- (c) Exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons;
- (d) Develop penal, civil, labour and administrative sanctions in domestic legislation to punish and redress the wrongs caused to women who are subjected to violence; women who are subjected to violence should be provided with access to the mechanisms of justice and, as provided for by national legislation, to just and effective remedies for the harm that they have suffered; States should also inform women of their rights in seeking redress through such mechanisms;

⁸Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 3; and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 9.

⁹International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, article 12.

¹⁰Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 23; and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, articles 6 and 7.

¹¹Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 5; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 7; and Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

(e) Consider the possibility of developing national plans of action to promote the protection of women against any form of violence, or to include provisions for that purpose in plans already existing, taking into account, as appropriate, such cooperation as can be provided by non-governmental organizations, particularly those concerned with the issue of violence against women;

(f) Develop, in a comprehensive way, preventive approaches and all those measures of a legal, political, administrative and cultural nature that promote the protection of women against any form of violence, and ensure that the re-victimization of women does not occur because of laws insensitive to gender considerations, enforcement practices or other interventions;

(g) Work to ensure, to the maximum extent feasible in the light of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation, that women subjected to violence and, where appropriate, their children have specialized assistance, such as rehabilitation, assistance in child care and maintenance, treatment, counselling, and health and social services, facilities and programmes, as well as support structures, and should take all other appropriate measures to promote their safety and physical and psychological rehabilitation;

(h) Include in government budgets adequate resources for their activities related to the elimination of violence against women;

(i) Take measures to ensure that law enforcement officers and public officials responsible for implementing policies to prevent, investigate and punish violence against women receive training to sensitize them to the needs of women;

(j) Adopt all appropriate measures, especially in the field of education, to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women and to eliminate prejudices, customary practices and all other practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes and on stereotyped roles for men and women;

(k) Promote research, collect data and compile statistics, especially concerning domestic violence, relating to the prevalence of different forms of violence against women and encourage research on the causes, nature, seriousness and consequences of violence against women and on the effectiveness of measures implemented to prevent and redress violence against women; those statistics and findings of the research will be made public;

(l) Adopt measures directed towards the elimination of violence against women who are especially vulnerable to violence;

(m) Include, in submitting reports as required under relevant human rights instruments of the United Nations, information pertaining to violence against women and measures taken to implement the present Declaration;

(n) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines to assist in the implementation of the principles set forth in the present Declaration;

(o) Recognize the important role of the women's movement and non-governmental organizations worldwide in raising awareness and alleviating the problem of violence against women;

(p) Facilitate and enhance the work of the women's movement and non-governmental organizations and cooperate with them at local, national and regional levels;

(q) Encourage intergovernmental regional organizations of which they are members to include the elimination of violence against women in their programmes, as appropriate.

Article 5

The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system should, within their respective fields of competence, contribute to the recognition and realization of the rights and the principles set forth in the present Declaration and, to this end, should, *inter alia*:

(a) Foster international and regional cooperation with a view to defining regional strategies for combating violence, exchanging experiences and financing programmes relating to the elimination of violence against women;

(b) Promote meetings and seminars with the aim of creating and raising awareness among all persons of the issue of the elimination of violence against women;

(c) Foster coordination and exchange within the United Nations system between human rights treaty bodies to address the issue of violence against women effectively;

(d) Include in analyses prepared by organizations and bodies of the United Nations system of social trends and problems, such as the periodic reports on the world social situation, examination of trends in violence against women;

(e) Encourage coordination between organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to incorporate the issue of violence against women into ongoing programmes, especially with reference to groups of women particularly vulnerable to violence;

(f) Promote the formulation of guidelines or manuals relating to violence against women, taking into account the measures referred to in the present Declaration;

(g) Consider the issue of the elimination of violence against women, as appropriate, in fulfilling their mandates with respect to the implementation of human rights instruments;

(h) Cooperate with non-governmental organizations in addressing the issue of violence against women.

Article 6

Nothing in the present Declaration shall affect any provision that is more conducive to the elimination of violence against women that may be contained in the legislation of a State or in any international convention, treaty or other instrument in force in a State.

46. Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice*

1. The multifaceted nature of violence against women suggests that different strategies are required for different manifestations of violence and the various settings in which it occurs. The practical measures, strategies and activities described below can be introduced in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice to deal with the problem of violence against women. Except where otherwise specified, the term “women” encompasses “girl children”.

2. Recalling the definition of violence against women contained in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women¹ and reiterated in the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women,² the Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice build upon the measures adopted by Governments in the Platform for Action, bearing in mind that some groups of women are especially vulnerable to violence.

3. The Model Strategies and Practical Measures specifically acknowledge the need for an active policy of bringing into the mainstream a gender perspective

*General Assembly resolution 52/86, annex.

¹General Assembly resolution 48/104.

²*Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution I, annex II.

in all policies and programmes related to violence against women and of achieving gender equality and equal and fair access to justice, as well as establishing the goal of gender balance in areas of decision-making related to the elimination of violence against women. The Model Strategies and Practical Measures should be applied as guidelines in a manner consistent with relevant international instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,³ the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴ and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,⁵ with a view to furthering their fair and effective implementation.

4. The Model Strategies and Practical Measures should be implemented by Member States and other entities, without prejudice to the principle of gender equality before the law, in order to facilitate the efforts by Governments to deal with the various manifestations of violence against women within the criminal justice system.

5. The Model Strategies and Practical Measures are aimed at providing de jure and de facto equality between women and men. The Model Strategies and Practical Measures do not give preferential treatment to women but are aimed at ensuring that any inequalities or forms of discrimination that women face in achieving access to justice, particularly in respect of acts of violence, are redressed.

I. CRIMINAL LAW

6. Member States are urged:

(a) To periodically review, evaluate and revise their laws, codes and procedures, especially their criminal laws, to ensure their value and effectiveness in eliminating violence against women and to remove provisions that allow for or condone violence against women;

(b) To review, evaluate and revise their criminal and civil laws, within the framework of their national legal systems, in order to ensure that all acts of violence against women are prohibited and, if not, to adopt measures to do so;

³Resolution 34/180, annex.

⁴Resolution 44/25, annex.

⁵See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

(c) To review, evaluate and revise their criminal laws in order to ensure that:

- (i) Persons who are brought before the courts on judicial matters in respect of violent crimes or who are convicted of such crimes can be restricted in their possession and use of firearms and other regulated weapons, within the framework of their national legal systems;
- (ii) Individuals can be prohibited or restrained, within the framework of their national legal systems, from harassing, intimidating or threatening women.

II. CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

7. Member States are urged to review, evaluate and revise their criminal procedure, as appropriate, in order to ensure that:

(a) The police have, with judicial authorization where required by national law, adequate powers to enter premises and conduct arrests in cases of violence against women, including confiscation of weapons;

(b) The primary responsibility for initiating prosecutions lies with prosecution authorities and does not rest with women subjected to violence;

(c) Women subjected to violence have an opportunity to testify in court proceedings equal to that of other witnesses and that measures are available to facilitate such testimony and to protect their privacy;

(d) Rules and principles of defence do not discriminate against women and such defences as honour or provocation do not allow perpetrators of violence against women to escape all criminal responsibility;

(e) Perpetrators who commit acts of violence against women while voluntarily under the influence of alcohol or drugs are not absolved of all criminal or other responsibility;

(f) Evidence of prior acts of violence, abuse, stalking and exploitation by the perpetrator is considered during court proceedings, in accordance with the principles of national criminal law;

(g) Courts, subject to the constitution of their State, have the authority to issue protection and restraining orders in cases of violence against women, including removal of the perpetrator from the domicile, prohibiting further contact with the victim and other affected parties, inside and outside the domicile, and to impose penalties for breaches of these orders;

(h) Measures can be taken when necessary to ensure the safety of victims and their families and to protect them from intimidation and retaliation;

(i) Safety risks are taken into account in decisions concerning non-custodial or quasi-custodial sentences, the granting of bail, conditional release, parole or probation.

III. POLICE

8. Member States are urged, within the framework of their national legal systems:

(a) To ensure that the applicable provisions of laws, codes and procedures related to violence against women are consistently enforced in such a way that all criminal acts of violence against women are recognized and responded to accordingly by the criminal justice system;

(b) To develop investigative techniques that do not degrade women subjected to violence and that minimize intrusion into their lives, while maintaining standards for the collection of the best evidence;

(c) To ensure that police procedures, including decisions on the arrest, detention and terms of any form of release of the perpetrator, take into account the need for the safety of the victim and others related through family, socially or otherwise, and that these procedures also prevent further acts of violence;

(d) To empower the police to respond promptly to incidents of violence against women;

(e) To ensure that the exercise of police powers is undertaken according to the rule of law and codes of conduct and that the police may be held accountable for any infringement thereof;

(f) To encourage women to join police forces, including at the operational level.

IV. SENTENCING AND CORRECTION

9. Member States are urged, as appropriate:

(a) To review, evaluate and revise sentencing policies and procedures in order to ensure that they meet the goals of:

(i) Holding offenders accountable for their acts related to violence against women;

(ii) Stopping violent behaviour;

- (iii) Taking into account the impact on victims and their family members of sentences imposed on perpetrators who are members of their families;
 - (iv) Promoting sanctions that are comparable to those for other violent crimes;
- (b) To ensure that a woman subjected to violence is notified of any release of the offender from detention or imprisonment where the safety of the victim in such disclosure outweighs invasion of the offender's privacy;
- (c) To take into account in the sentencing process the severity of the physical and psychological harm and the impact of victimization, including through victim impact statements where such practices are permitted by law;
- (d) To make available to the courts through legislation a full range of sentencing dispositions to protect the victim, other affected persons and society from further violence;
- (e) To ensure that the sentencing judge is encouraged to recommend treatment of the offender at the time of sentencing;
- (f) To ensure that there are appropriate measures in place to eliminate violence against women who are detained for any reason;
- (g) To develop and evaluate offender treatment programmes for different types of offenders and offender profiles;
- (h) To protect the safety of victims and witnesses before, during and after criminal proceedings.

V. VICTIM SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

10. Member States are urged, as appropriate:

- (a) To make available to women who have been subjected to violence information on rights and remedies and on how to obtain them, in addition to information about participating in criminal proceedings and the scheduling, progress and ultimate disposition of the proceedings;
- (b) To encourage and assist women subjected to violence in lodging and following through on formal complaints;
- (c) To ensure that women subjected to violence receive, through formal and informal procedures, prompt and fair redress for the harm that they have suffered, including the right to seek restitution or compensation from the offenders or the State;

(d) To provide for court mechanisms and procedures that are accessible and sensitive to the needs of women subjected to violence and that ensure the fair processing of cases;

(e) To establish a registration system for judicial protection and restraining orders, where such orders are permitted by national law, so that police or criminal justice officials can quickly determine whether such an order is in force.

VI. HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

11. Member States, in cooperation with the private sector, relevant professional associations, foundations, non-governmental and community organizations, including organizations seeking women's equality, and research institutes are urged, as appropriate:

(a) To establish, fund and coordinate a sustainable network of accessible facilities and services for emergency and temporary residential accommodation for women and their children who are at risk of becoming or who have been victims of violence;

(b) To establish, fund and coordinate services such as toll-free information lines, professional multidisciplinary counselling and crisis intervention services and support groups in order to benefit women who are victims of violence and their children;

(c) To design and sponsor programmes to caution against and prevent alcohol and substance abuse, given the frequent presence of alcohol and substance abuse in incidents of violence against women;

(d) To establish better linkages between medical services, both private and emergency, and criminal justice agencies for purposes of reporting, recording and responding to acts of violence against women;

(e) To develop model procedures to help participants in the criminal justice system to deal with women subjected to violence;

(f) To establish, where possible, specialized units with persons from relevant disciplines especially trained to deal with the complexities and victim sensitivities involved in cases of violence against women.

VII. TRAINING

12. Member States, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, including organizations seeking women's equality, and in collaboration with relevant professional associations, are urged, as appropriate:

(a) To provide for or to encourage mandatory cross-cultural and gender-sensitivity training modules for police, criminal justice officials, practitioners and professionals involved in the criminal justice system that deal with the unacceptability of violence against women, its impact and consequences and that promote an adequate response to the issue of violence against women;

(b) To ensure adequate training, sensitivity and education of police, criminal justice officials, practitioners and professionals involved in the criminal justice system regarding all relevant human rights instruments;

(c) To encourage professional associations to develop enforceable standards of practice and behaviour, which promote justice and equality for women, for practitioners involved in the criminal justice system.

VIII. RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

13. Member States and the institutes comprising the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network, relevant entities of the United Nations system, other relevant international organizations, research institutes and non-governmental organizations, including organizations seeking women's equality, are urged, as appropriate:

(a) To develop crime surveys on the nature and extent of violence against women;

(b) To gather data and information on a gender-disaggregated basis for analysis and use, together with existing data, in needs assessment, decision-making and policymaking in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, in particular concerning:

- (i) The different forms of violence against women, its causes and consequences;
- (ii) The extent to which economic deprivation and exploitation are linked to violence against women;
- (iii) The relationship between the victim and the offender;
- (iv) The rehabilitative or anti-recidivistic effect of various types of intervention on the individual offender and on the reduction of violence against women;
- (v) The use of firearms, drugs and alcohol, particularly in cases of violence against women in situations of domestic violence;
- (vi) The relationship between victimization or exposure to violence and subsequent violent activity;

(c) To monitor and issue annual reports on the incidence of violence against women, arrest and clearance rates, prosecution and case disposition of the offenders;

(d) To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in fulfilling the needs of women subjected to violence.

IX. CRIME PREVENTION MEASURES

14. Member States and the private sector, relevant professional associations, foundations, non-governmental and community organizations, including organizations seeking women's equality, and research institutes are urged, as appropriate:

(a) To develop and implement relevant and effective public awareness, public education and school programmes that prevent violence against women by promoting equality, cooperation, mutual respect and shared responsibilities between women and men;

(b) To develop multidisciplinary and gender-sensitive approaches within public and private entities that participate in the elimination of violence against women, especially through partnerships between law enforcement officials and services specialized in the protection of women victims of violence;

(c) To set up outreach programmes for offenders or persons identified as potential offenders in order to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the management and control of anger and attitude modification about gender roles and relations;

(d) To set up outreach programmes and offer information to women, including victims of violence, about gender roles, the human rights of women and the social, health, legal and economic aspects of violence against women, in order to empower women to protect themselves against all forms of violence;

(e) To develop and disseminate information on the different forms of violence against women and the availability of programmes to deal with that problem, including programmes concerning the peaceful resolution of conflicts, in a manner appropriate to the audience concerned, including in educational institutions at all levels;

(f) To support initiatives of organizations seeking women's equality and of non-governmental organizations to raise public awareness of the issue of violence against women and to contribute to its elimination.

15. Member States and the media, media associations, media self-regulatory bodies, schools and other relevant partners, while respecting the freedom of the

media, are urged, as appropriate, to develop public awareness campaigns and appropriate measures and mechanisms, such as codes of ethics and self-regulatory measures on media violence, aimed at enhancing respect for the rights of women and discouraging both discrimination against women and stereotyping of women.

X. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

16. Member States and United Nations bodies and institutes are urged, as appropriate:

(a) To exchange information concerning successful intervention models and preventive programmes in eliminating violence against women and to compile a directory of those models;

(b) To cooperate and collaborate at the regional and international levels with relevant entities to prevent violence against women and to promote measures to effectively bring perpetrators to justice, through mechanisms of international cooperation and assistance, in accordance with national law;

(c) To contribute to and support the United Nations Development Fund for Women in its activities to eliminate violence against women.

17. Member States are urged:

(a) To limit the extent of any reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to those that are formulated as precisely and as narrowly as possible and that are not incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention;

(b) To condemn all violations of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict, to recognize them as being violations of international human rights and humanitarian law and to call for a particularly effective response to violations of that kind, including, in particular, murder, systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy;

(c) To work actively towards ratification of or accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women for the States that are still not parties to it, so that universal ratification can be achieved by the year 2000;

(d) To give full consideration to integrating a gender perspective in the drafting of the statute of the international criminal court, particularly in respect of women who are victims of violence;

(e) To cooperate with and assist the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and

consequences in the performance of his or her mandated tasks and duties, to supply all information requested and to respond to the Special Rapporteur's visits and communications.

XI. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

18. Member States, United Nations bodies, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary funds, the institutes comprising the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network, other relevant international organizations, research institutes and non-governmental organizations, including organizations seeking women's equality, are urged, as appropriate:

(a) To encourage the translation of the Model Strategies and Practical Measures into local languages and to ensure its wide dissemination for use in training and education programmes;

(b) To utilize the Model Strategies and Practical Measures as a basis, a policy reference and a practical guide for activities aimed at eliminating violence against women;

(c) To assist Governments, at their request, in reviewing, evaluating and revising their criminal justice systems, including their criminal legislation, on the basis of the Model Strategies and Practical Measures;

(d) To support the technical cooperation activities of the institutes comprising the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network in eliminating violence against women;

(e) To develop coordinated national, regional and subregional plans and programmes to put the Model Strategies and Practical Measures into effect;

(f) To design standard training programmes and manuals for the police and criminal justice officials, based on the Model Strategies and Practical Measures;

(g) To periodically review and monitor, at the national and international levels, progress made in terms of plans, programmes and initiatives to eliminate violence against women in the context of the Model Strategies and Practical Measures.