



## **UNFPA, UN Women, UNODC and WHO Meeting on Multi-Sectoral Services to Respond to Gender-Based Violence against Women and Girls in Asia and the Pacific**

**28-30 June 2017, Bangkok, Thailand**

### **Background:**

Gender-based violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a significant public health concern in Asia and the Pacific, with numerous consequences for the health, social and economic well-being of women and girls, stopping them from fulfilling their true potential. It also carries high economic costs for societies. It is an impediment to sustainable development. The recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the inclusion of SDG 5, Target 5.2, as well as others ending violence against women and gender-related SDG targets, reaffirm this.

Evidence on the extent of VAWG and its health and social consequences has been increasing, forming a basis for advocacy, policy-making and programmatic interventions. In response, many Member States in the Asia and Pacific Region are taking impressive steps to promote gender equality and address VAWG in collaboration with women's organization, UN agencies and other partners.

### **Global and Regional Commitments**

At the international and regional levels, various strands of work on VAWG have been converging. Building upon, inter alia, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), the 2013 Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 57) Agreed Conclusions<sup>1</sup> identified the need to scale up prevention and implement a comprehensive, coordinated and multi-sectoral range of services, including health, justice (police and legal) and social services, for survivors.

In 2010, this need for a systematic, comprehensive, coordinated, multi-sectoral and sustained approach to fighting violence against women by law enforcement, criminal justice, victim support, health and social services was stressed by the UN General Assembly when it adopted the Updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

In May 2016, the WHO World Health Assembly adopted the *Global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system within a national multi-sectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women, girls and children*.

These resolutions and the global plan of action on health systems response to VAWG, with the SDGs, provide a strong mandate for Member States to train service providers, improve services and strengthen multi-sectoral coordination for providing survivors of VAWG with holistic, comprehensive and survivor-centred care services.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/outcomes>

<sup>2</sup> E/2013/27 E/CN.6/2013/11, para (ddd)

## Role and contributions of the convening UN partners

UNFPA Asia-Pacific works to promote gender equality and end gender-based violence, including in the context of SDG targets 5.2 on ending all forms of violence against women and girls, and 5.3 on eliminating harmful practices. Key areas of work for UNFPA APRO include supporting the evidence base for ending violence against women (VAW), ensuring an integrated and multi-sectoral response to support to VAWG survivors, including in humanitarian context, preventing violence, and addressing harmful practices. UNFPA Asia Pacific Regional Office, with support provided by the Australian Government, has initiated a regional initiative – kNOwVAWdata project – that aims to ensure sustained capacity development at national and regional level for collection and analysis of VAW data in the region<sup>3</sup>.

UN Women has worked to improve the quality, integration and coordination of services in many countries. It has supported the development of laws and policies that are effectively implemented and help establish integrated services responding to survivors' needs for safety, health care, legal assistance, psychological and socioeconomic support. UN Women hosts the Virtual Knowledge Centre for Ending VAWG<sup>4</sup>, a resource centre with practical guidance, tools and resources for responding to and preventing VAWG, as well as the Global Database on Violence against Women<sup>5</sup>, providing comprehensive and up-to-date information on measures taken by Member States to address violence against women, in the areas of laws and policies, prevention, services, and statistical data. In Asia and the Pacific, UN Women has collaborated with ASEAN to develop and launch its Regional Plan of Action for Eliminating VAW. It has produced evidence on the costs of VAWG to national economies to assist with advocacy for stronger prevention and response, as well as investigated what the costs to governments would be to implement a minimum set of services to VAWG survivors in Lao PDR and Timor-Leste.

WHO has promoted understanding of GBV/VAW as a public health priority for the last 20 years. It has supported the health sector within a national multisectoral response as well as the estimation of national prevalence, as a basis for strengthened policies and action. In 2013, it published policy and clinical guidelines for responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women, followed by a clinical handbook for health care providers "Health care for women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence" in 2014. The clinical handbook, a joint publication with UNFPA and UN Women, forms the basis for the health component of the UN Joint Global Programme on *Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence* (see further below). WHO's Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) and South East Asia Regional Offices has collaborated with UNFPA and other partners to raise awareness among policy-makers and other stakeholders and disseminate and roll out the health guidelines and tools in selected countries (i.e. India, Cambodia, Vietnam, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea).

UNODC has decades of experience in supporting police and criminal justice systems in preventing and addressing violence against women and promoting access to justice, as part of its mandate to strengthen the rule of law through the prevention of crime and the promotion of effective, fair, humane and accountable criminal justice systems in line with the UN standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice. UNODC has developed a number of tools on essential police and justice services for victims and survivors of violence against women, including handbooks and training materials for police and prosecutors, as well as a detailed implementation plan for criminal justice systems.<sup>1</sup> In Asia-Pacific, UNODC has supported Member States in developing and updating criminal legislation, training of police and prosecutors and the provision of legal aid. Relevant examples include ongoing projects in Myanmar on police responses to gender-based violence and in Viet Nam on

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<sup>1</sup> Available from <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/tools.html>

strengthening law enforcement and justice sectors to prevent and respond to domestic violence, as well as a regional training of trainers on effective prosecution responses to violence against women and girls, held in 2016 in collaboration with UN Women and the Thailand Institute of Justice.

### **The Joint UN Programme on *Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence (2016-2018)***

To improve the quality of and access to essential services, a Joint UN Programme was established on *Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence* with participation of UNFPA, UN Women, UNDP, UNODC and WHO. This programme sought to fill the gap between the agreements made at the international level for responding to violence against women and girls and work done at the country level on how to develop quality services and responses.

The Joint Programme developed comprehensive and collaborative technical guidance to countries on how to provide quality essential services based on internationally agreed standards, guidelines and tools for strengthening the capacity of service providers. In 2016, the Joint Programme launched the global guidelines on the Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence comprising of 5 modules covering health, justice and policing, social services and coordination and governance. These guidelines and tools are being piloted in up to 10 low-to-middle income countries in 2016-2018. To date, the following pilot countries have been selected: Cambodia, Kiribati, Pakistan, Solomon Islands, and Vietnam (Asia-Pacific); Guatemala and Peru (Latin America and the Caribbean); and Mozambique and Tunisia (Africa). It is now timely to translate these global and regional partnerships into coordinated regional support to Member States.

Member States in the Asia and Pacific region are increasingly requesting technical assistance on responding to VAWG, as they prioritise efforts to strengthen this area of work in line with WHO, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women and other global guidance. As part of these efforts and following direct support to countries over the last few years, it is proposed to bring selected Member States from Asia and Pacific Region together for a meeting to agree on the required actions to strengthen multi-sectoral response to gender-based violence against women and girls.

#### **Objectives:**

*Overall objective:* To strengthen the multi-sectoral response to gender-based violence against women and girls in context of the *Global plan of action on health systems response to VAWG* and the *Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence*.

#### *Specific objectives:*

- (1) To review progress, share achievements and lessons learned in strengthening the coordinated, multi-sectoral response to gender-based violence against women and girls at the country level;
- (2) To introduce participating Member States to the tools, guidance and the political mandates for implementing multi-sectoral services to address gender-based violence against women and girls with a focus on the police, justice, social and health sector and the role of coordination and governance in this regard;
- (3) To identify the next steps for strengthening the implementation of an essential package of coordinated, multi-sectoral services at the country level based on the guidance and tools; and
- (4) To identify areas for multisectoral collaboration and joint UN support on addressing gender-based violence against women and girls to participating Member States.

**Title:** UNFPA, UN Women, UNODC and WHO Meeting on Multi-Sectoral Services to Respond to Gender-Based Violence against Women and Girls in Asia and the Pacific

**Dates:** 28-30 June 2017 covering Bangladesh, Bhutan, DPR Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

**Location:** Bangkok, Thailand

**Organizers:** The meetings will be co-organized by UNFPA (Asia and the Pacific Regional Office), UN Women (Asia and the Pacific Regional Office), WHO Regional Office for the South-East Asia (SEARO), WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO) and UNODC (HQ).

**Participants:** Each country delegation will include the following participants:

- 1 senior official from the **Ministry of Health** responsible for gender-based violence against women and girls within RMNCAH programme.
- 1 senior official from the **Ministry of Gender/Women or ministry responsible for gender-based violence against women and girls** with responsibility for coordination of VAWG response and/or implementing National Action Plan on GBV/VAWG.
- 1 senior official from the **Ministry of Justice** with responsibility for implementing and monitoring laws and policies on GBV/VAWG
- 1 senior official from the **police sector** with responsibility for implementing services to respond to GBV/VAWG survivors.
- 1 senior official from **social services sector** with responsibility for implementing services to respond to GBV/VAWG survivors.
- 1 senior participant from an **NGO** or civil society organization providing GBV/VAWG services or conducting advocacy on behalf of survivors of GBV/VAW

**Secretariat:** The meetings are expected to be attended by the following Secretariat members including:

- WHO staff from EMRO , SEARO and HQ ; and selected WHO country offices (focal points on gender/GBV);
- UNFPA Regional Office staff; UNFPA HQ staff, country office focal points
- UN Women Regional Office and HQ staff ; and selected country office ERAW focal points
- UNODC staff from HQ and Regional Office

**Other partners:** Other UN partners (including UNDP) as well as selected technical experts as resource persons, and NGOs will also be invited.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://asiapacific.unfpa.org/publications/knownvawdata-project-overview>

<sup>4</sup> [www.endvawnow.org](http://www.endvawnow.org)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en>