

Expert Meeting on Collecting and Using Data to Demand Effectiveness of Policies Combating Violence Against Women

(Sarajevo, 23-24 November 2009)

REPORT OF THE MEETING

I. Background

1. Data collection, analysis and research is a foundation for all evidence- and results-based programming, an essential element for public awareness-raising, advocacy, policy development, service delivery, and monitoring to foster improvements and accountability (UNIFEM Global Strategy on Violence against Women 2008-2011). Reliable and regularly collected data is crucial to determine the extent of the problem, the level of violence against women, but also for developing indicators to assess the effectiveness of policies. Without data, advocates and policy makers do not know what interventions are successful in combating VAW.
2. Outcome 3 of the *Framework for Action* of the Secretary General's Campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women 2008-2015" calls for "all countries to have in place data collection and analysis systems that support policies and programmes to end violence against women and girls."
(<http://endviolence.un.org/framework.shtml>)
3. A concrete step forward on this agenda is the adoption of an interim set of indicators on VAW by the UN Statistical Commission at its 40th session in February 2009, based on the Report of the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission.
(<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-issues-focus.htm>)
4. Data collection systems on violence against women are not yet in place in countries in South East Europe, but significant initiatives toward this goal are currently underway and have been endorsed as part of national strategies in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the F.Y.R. of Macedonia and Serbia. While these systems are being developed, it is also essential that experts and national stakeholders work to establish a framework of indicators that will serve to assess the effectiveness of responses to VAW.

II. Purpose

5. In the context of its Sub-regional Strategy and the Secretary General's Campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women (particularly Outcome 3 of

the *Framework for Action*), UNIFEM CEE supported an expert meeting on *Collecting and Using Data on VAW in South East Europe*. The main goal of the meeting was to stimulate a strategic discussion on the development of a regionally relevant framework of indicators to assess effectiveness of policies against VAW. The workshop focused on the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia and Serbia.

III. Practices of data collection on violence against women in South East Europe

6. Administrative data collection - records kept by different agencies (police, social care centers, health professionals) - depends largely on the definition of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women provided for by legislation in each individual country (Criminal Code, Family Code or specific legislation against domestic violence).

7. **Albania** - VAW has in the last few years received increased attention. However, in a survey developed in 2008 with the aim of measuring VAW incidence, psychological violence was not recognized by the sample group. A network of different institutions for the coordination and implementation of the national strategy to EAW has been established. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs collected data from different stakeholders to create a common model. With the help of the survey and the collected data, a need was identified to raise awareness among the Albanian population about the situation and definition of violence against women, focusing specifically on rural areas. Among the survey findings was also that most victims do not contact the police. For the future, some measures should be implemented, such as: developing legislation that not only addresses domestic violence but violence against women in general. A legally binding comprehensive definition of violence against women will also broaden the collection of data on this phenomenon.

8. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** - For a long time, the main actors in addressing domestic violence have been NGOs, and although government agencies are increasing their level of response to VAW, there is still a lack of government statistics gathered on this issue. BandH has only very general statistics from the Agency of Statistics at national and entity levels. Social centers, police, courts and prosecution offices only have data on reported victims. Due to the work of NGOs, the extent of VAW has been recognized, but the policy framework does not yet address all forms of VAW. For example, in the Federation of BandH, there is a law focused on family violence but it does not include other kinds of violence. There are various projects aimed at improving legislative and institutional frameworks supported by international and intergovernmental

organizations, but further improvements to policies are still needed, particularly in developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

9. **FYR of Macedonia** - In 2004, changes in the Family law meant that violence was recognized as a problem which also occurs within the family. New protection measures for victims were implemented, such as shelters and social services. In law, domestic violence is seen as a crime and specific sanctions are prescribed for perpetrators. There is a National Strategy for preventing Family Violence 2008-2011, but a method for implementation of treatment programmes for perpetrators has yet to be resolved. Regarding data collection and availability, FYR of Macedonia only collects reported cases of domestic violence. An annual report is published with the collected data and is publicly disseminated. There are issues regarding the collection of data, for example how information about perpetrators is gathered, and there is no information gathered in certain sectors, such as schools. Measures to implement in the future should include collecting data from more sources than the police, such as also from social services. Special attention should be paid to avoiding double counting of cases.

10. **Serbia** - For the most part, NGOs have undertaken the main work in ending violence against women. Government response has, however, increased significantly in the past couple of years, but legislative and policy frameworks remain incipient. The Serbian government is developing a survey on the incidence of DV; to date, the questionnaire has been developed, but the survey has not been implemented. Different stakeholders have data, but public accessibility is very limited. The National Institute of Statistics collects only data on reported cases. The main stakeholders working with victims of domestic violence face challenges in communicating data. There is no specific law that addresses gender-based violence or domestic violence; there is only criminal law. The Gender Equality Directorate has commissioned a group of experts to assess the feasibility of a proposed specific law against domestic violence.

11. **Slovakia** - The country has legislation, strategies and an ERAW action plan. Comparing VAW surveys from 2003 and 2008, no substantial changes/improvements were noticeable, which, according to the participants in the discussion, indicates that something is wrong with the implementation of the action plan and possibly at the level of legislation. Some general measures for the future were brainstormed, such as the need for very specific social services for domestic violence victims or lobbying for a special law focused on DV that would include, amongst other things, a clear and inclusive definition of relationship (including for example couples that are dating). A clear legal and institutional framework can help to shape what kind of data is needed and to identify gaps.

12. Some **promising practices** are developing in the region with respect to collection of administrative data mainly on domestic violence at the level of specific agencies (please see below under section IV on initiatives to develop integrated systems of data collection):

- The Institute for Public Health (Macedonia) is unique in the region in its practice of collecting data on violence injury and violence injury prevention; work is underway to develop a form to collect data on violence against women that will be aligned with the requirements of the WHO (in particular, International Statistical Classification of Diseases (ICD) / External causes of morbidity and mortality).
- The Institute for Social Affairs (FYR Macedonia) is developing standardized data collection sheets for social welfare centers.
- The Government of Serbia and line ministries are planning to elaborate protocols of data collection for the courts, health care system, police, social centers, etc.

13. **Surveys on VAW: Four areas are important when conducting a survey on VAW:** (i) standards for research and surveys; (ii) planning a survey; (iii) technical aspect of a survey; (iv) impact of the survey. There are no internationally-adopted standards for researchers who conduct surveys on VAW, but there are examples. There are guidelines for survey standards and accessing micro-data. For example, the guidelines for planning surveys developed by UNECE prescribe that the following steps should be included in the planning of a survey: (1) A series of roundtables (including Ministries, NSOs, NGOs) as a first step in planning; (2) Experiences from other countries; (3) International expertise; (4) Political support and (5) Service support. Regarding the technical aspect of a survey, decisions must be made on sample size, who should carry out the interview (whether NGOs or NSOs or others); training of interviewers (it is recommended that training should be between 5 days and 2 weeks and involve role play); whether an independent researcher or private company is to analyze data. The impact of the survey will depend on the use of media (when and how?); assurance of impartiality and timing of the release of results.

IV. Current initiatives to develop integrated systems for collecting data on violence against women and domestic violence in South East Europe

14. The following initiatives were presented:

- UNIFEM supported the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities in coordinating an Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Monitoring the Status of Women to develop a comprehensive set of Harmonized

Indicators on Gender Equality and the Status of Women in Albania, which include a component on domestic violence.

- The “Refleksione”, Women’s Association with support from the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women coordinated work among experts from the Network against Gender-based Violence and Trafficking to develop a database system for keeping integrated records of cases of domestic violence in 5 municipalities in Albania. Plans for up-scaling the work, including adoption of a database and case management system at national level, are underway.

- A UN Joint Programme (UNDP and UNFPA) in Bosnia and Herzegovina on Preventing and Combating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence includes a component of support to national stakeholders to develop an integrated system of data collection on sexual and gender-based violence.

- A UN Joint Programme in FYR Macedonia (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM and WHO) on Strengthening National Capacities to Prevent Domestic Violence provides support to the creation of an online platform for data sharing among relevant agencies working against domestic violence.

- The Gender Equality Directorate in Serbia with technical assistance from UNDP is developing a Protocol for keeping standardized records for reported cases of domestic violence at the level of relevant agencies in Serbia. A working group convened by the Secretariat for Labor, Employment and Gender Equality in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Serbia is developing a Protocol for keeping standardized records on reported cases of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence by all relevant agencies in Vojvodina.

V. The role of NGOs

15. The role of NGOs as users of data produced and shared by government institutions needs to be strengthened while the research capacity of NGOs must be increased so that advocacy for relevant changes in legislation and policy can be more effective. NGOs use data mainly to target policy makers/ other decision-makers with a view to improving policy.

16. NGOs were also the first producers of data in the region and have played a key role in changing legislation and increasing government awareness of the seriousness and impact of the situation. Many NGOs would like to secure their inputs in the official data collection process, as they often record more or different cases than police, social services and other professionals which provide assistance and support to victims of DV or which restrain perpetrators. Some NGOs (for example: Foundation for Local Democracy in BandH) have organized training on data collection with the cooperation of statistical offices in order to enhance their capacity to input official data. As a consequence, NGOs *produce* data on request from statistical offices and based on agreement between institutions and NGOs.

17. Some NGOs which run shelters either independently or with government grants and funding need to have a clear strategy as governments move toward taking direct action (specific benefits, providing shelters, changing legislation, etc.). A strategic workshop for NGOs in the region could be promoted.

18. In some cases NGOs need to professionalise their services to victims and increase their theoretical and practical knowledge on handling cases and aiming for the independence of the victims they serve. Monitoring and evaluating their own work is as equally important as monitoring and evaluating government efforts.

19. In some cases NGOs collaborate very closely with governments as they move forward in promulgating new legislation, carrying out dedicated surveys and strengthening systems of data collection on reported cases. In some countries (Georgia, for example), inter-ministerial cooperation – between the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Education - has led to agreements on a set of indicators to monitor policy implementation. However, even in countries where these indicators and targets are in place, there are big gaps in the use of data to assess the effects of, and improve, policy. NGOs have an important role to play, through advocacy, in linking data collection to policy making. NGOs can be important agents of evidence-based policy making processes.

VI. Present challenges for constructing a regional framework of indicators on VAW

20. As a general conclusion for all the countries involved, it is important to look at the framework of each country (situation and policy measures) and try to identify the missing gaps regarding data collection on domestic violence and other forms of violence against women.

21. Countries in South East Europe are at different stages of developing data collection systems for DV and VAW more comprehensively. The international frameworks being developed at UN level can help shape their systems of collection while at the same time they can use the data they have now more effectively to monitor existing policies' progress and impact.

22. There are differences in legislative approach as some countries only have an indication for *domestic* violence, in the context of the family or households, in family law and criminal codes. A first comparative indicator can be whether there is a specific law, what types of violence it covers, the range of relationships between victims and perpetrators that it covers, etc.

23. Whether legislation recognizes a particular form of violence against women or not has a decisive impact on the data collected. Sexual violence such as marital rape may go unrecorded, because of a lack of specific legislative definition for this form of violence against women.
24. Participants commented on the inconsistencies in legislation to effectively respond to VAW, which in turn affect sentencing and interpretation in particular. This affects the interpretation of the data produced as well as its use to improve policy.
25. In some countries, data produced by different agencies is accessible. However, the collaborative efforts are incipient or inexistent. It is important to take into account the weakness of more integrated approaches (not to be confused with all institutions producing or recording data about victims and perpetrators in the same way). An integrated approach refers mainly to collaboration and referrals between institutions that could greatly reduce the burden of victims as far as having to repeat telling their story as well as keeping perpetrators under tighter control.
26. The police and judiciary do not always share and/or have systematic collection of their interventions. It is necessary to advocate and work on data that has a minimum of disaggregation by sex and age in order to make a minimum analysis of general cases and reports handled by these two key institutions in the cycle of response to cases of violence against women.
27. There are very few countries in the region (Albania) that have carried out dedicated surveys on domestic violence.
28. As part of the framework of indicators, some participants indicated that costing exercises could be very important in increasing the awareness of governments for developing or adequately funding efforts focused on prevention.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

29. As stated in other similar regional and sub-regional workshops in other parts of the world, there is a tendency to focus first and foremost on domestic violence, leaving other forms of violence with less attention. The UN has already provided definitions of VAW that should be incorporated. The Council of Europe has also provided a definition, which may soon become legally binding for countries that will decide to sign and ratify the expected Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

30. A common framework of indicators on VAW in South East Europe is an aim that will be achieved contingent on the efforts by different countries to build and strengthen specific measures in the area of data collection and analysis on VAW. However, one of the main conclusions from the information shared is that these efforts are in their initial steps in most countries.
31. The framework(s) should be accompanied by careful registration of metadata¹ in each country by each institution involved so that exchange between institutions is facilitated as well as interpretation and adequate linkages.
32. The framework for the region and the individual countries can follow UN recommendations to organise data around three main types of indicators: Structural, Process and Outcome (see presentation by Jessica Gardner from UNECE and the document produced by the Friends of the Chair of the UN Statistical Commission for more details).
33. In the case of **structural** indicators, legislation (national and international), numbers of NGOs working with victims or advocating, etc. will give a picture of where the countries stand institutionally and can also serve as a basis to monitor policy and implementation of legislation and national action plans.
34. In the case of **process** indicators the number of reported cases, training for support victims, expenditure on support, etc. will measure the impact of efforts and resources earmarked to combat and prevent the problem.
35. Finally, **outcome** indicators will measure rates of femicide, prevalence of violence, public opinion, etc. that will keep a tab on the situation and its evolution.
36. The group recommended the use of a broad set of indicators. Indicators should be agreed by a cooperative/ inter-ministerial body (not just statistical offices). Consideration should be given to the inclusion of NGOs in data collection. It is also important to take into account the purpose and use of indicators.
37. Whenever possible, data collection should be standardized to match international instruments. Special attention shall be given to the current proposal of the Spanish Presidency of the EU to create a European Observatory on Gender-based Violence, which will design common indicators on VAW, in collaboration with the European Gender Institute.

¹ In the FoC report we find the following description of metadata: underlying concepts, variables, classifications used, the methodology of data collection and processing, and indications or measures of the accuracy of statistical information.

38. A regional definition of domestic violence may help in harmonizing the differences in approaches in different countries.
39. Population-based surveys are critical in generating data on the extent of the problem of violence against women/ level of violence against women. No other data source is able to offer reliable estimates, especially given the very high rate of underreporting.
40. Dedicated surveys should strictly follow recommendations on confidentiality, safety, recruitment/ training of surveyors and support for participating victims.
41. It would be advisable that, inasmuch as possible, dedicated surveys have a minimum of common questions and methodology so that comparability between countries can be established.
42. Additional training may be needed to collect data more systematically. Training would be needed for both governmental agencies and NGOs. Experience in other countries (Costa Rica, for example) has shown that legislation itself does not make a difference, but training does.
43. Country-specific evaluation of policies should be conducted focusing on the response of relevant agencies.
44. At the same time, cross-national monitoring frameworks should be strengthened.
45. In answer to the question “What do we need to know in order to know that a law works?”, the participants selected the following questions/ indicators for evaluation:
- The rate of intimate partner violence
 - If the objective of the law is intervention with perpetrators, then data should be collected on percentage of police reports, arrests, medical assistance to perpetrators (for substance abuse, for example)
 - Protective measures (In some cases, data show the number of crimes recorded is significantly higher than the number of protection measures issued in the same period, on the same territory)
 - Successful prosecutions: Is there an increase in prosecutions? How many prosecuted cases result in sentencing?
 - If legislation punishes – are there tougher sanctions for domestic violence after the introduction of the law?
 - Treatment for perpetrators and impact

- Murders and suicides: Is there a decrease of murder cases of women after the introduction of the law?
- Inconsistencies: legal, administrative
- Are measures implemented?
- When do women report to the police?
- What percentages of victims need medical assistance?
- Are women with legal protective measures (like protection orders) in a better situation than others without them?
- Reporting on satisfaction: Are the victims more satisfied with the court process?

46. A yearly conference/workshop to share advances made or, alternatively, a yearly update of the mapping exercise that could be distributed to participants and beyond would be very advisable in order to reinforce mutual learning.

47. It is very important to remember that VAW occurs in a specific context where inequalities between women and men and attitudes toward violence (for example extended use of small arms) are reflected in other types of indicators. With regard to VAW, some of the more general indicators of women's situation in any given country or the region can include: participation in the labor market and working conditions (such as type of contract, informal market work with reference to social protection, etc.); wage gaps and horizontal and vertical labor market segregation; poverty and living conditions; representation of women in political and economic decision-making posts; health and education indicators should also be used to interpret the indicators of VAW.

Bratislava, January 2010

Annex: ANNOTATED AGENDA

Day 1

Monday November 23, 2009

8.45 – 9.00

Registration at the Conference Room

9.00 – 9.30

Welcome and Introductions

9.30 – 11.00

Session I: Taking stock of practices of data collection on violence against women in Southeast Europe

The purpose of this session is to exchange information among participants about the current practices of data collection on violence against women and particularly domestic violence in Southeast Europe. The session will be opened by a comparative analysis of current practices of collecting data on violence against women in countries of Southeast Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, F.Y.R of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) and will continue with brief presentations from representatives of institutions that have a mandate to collect data on violence against women. Presentations should focus on the regulations in place for collecting data on VAW and specific indicators used, where applicable.

The introductory presentation should be about 20 min. Presentations should not be longer than 10 min, but presenters are encouraged to limit their presentations to 5-7 min in order to have time for discussions.

Presentations:

Prof. Lori Sudderth, Quinnipiac University, USA

Dr. Barbara Holubova, Institute for Work and Family Studies, Slovakia

Ms. Alma Gjurgji, Chief of Sector for Protection of Juvenile and Domestic Violence, Ministry of Interior, Albania

Ms. Marsida Xhaferllari, Ministry of Justice, Albania

Ms. Majda Cehajic, State Gender Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Zlatan Hrnčić, Gender Center of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ms. Jelena Milinovic, Gender Center of Republika Srpska, BiH

11.00 – 11.30

Coffee break

11.30 – 12.15

Session I (continued): Taking stock of practices of data collection on violence against women in Southeast Europe

Presentations:

Prof. Fimka Tozija, Institute for Public Health, F.Y.R of Macedonia

Ms. Dusanka Petrova, Institute for Social Affairs, F.Y.R of Macedonia

Ms. Cena Calovska, Ministry of Interior, F.Y.R of Macedonia

Mr. Igor Vucinic, Department of Gender Equality, Government of Montenegro

Ms. Ljulja Djonaj, Police Directorate of Montenegro

12.15 – 13.00

Session II: Good practices in collecting and using data on violence against women

This session will look at good practices developed and/or collected at the level of the UN for a methodological model for collecting VAW data; the session will also explore difficulties for standardizing data collection from a regional perspective and it will elaborate on the case of Spain.

Presentation:

Dr. Elizabeth Villagomez, Almenara Estudios, Spain

13.00 – 14.30

Lunch

14.30 – 15.30

Session III: Current initiatives to develop integrated systems for collecting data on violence against women and domestic violence in Southeast Europe

This session will introduce participants to several initiatives to harmonize and standardize the collection of data on VAW that are currently ongoing or have been piloted in Southeast Europe. Some initiatives have also led to the development of indicators for measuring violence against women. In discussing these initiatives, the purpose of this session is to focus on comparability and policy uses of data on VAW.

Presentations:

Ms. Christine Arab, UNIFEM Albania

Ms. Elvana Gadeshi, Women's Association "Refleksione", Albania

Ms. Klelija Balta, UNDP and *Ms. Danijela Alijagic*, UNFPA, Preventing and Combating Sexual and Gender Based Violence Joint Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ms. Jasmina Muric, Gender Equality Directorate, Serbia
Ms. Jasmina Nikolic, Victimology Society on behalf of Provincial Secretariat for Labor, Employment and Gender Equality of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Serbia
Ms. Makedonka Trajkovska, UNFPA Macedonia, UN Joint Project on Strengthening National Capacities to Prevent Domestic Violence

15.30 – 16.00

Health break

16.00 – 17.00

Session IV: Advocating with numbers – Using data to demand effectiveness of policies against VAW

This session will focus on the links between data collection, making data available and monitoring the effectiveness of policies against violence against women.

Presentations:

Ms. Biljana Brankovic, Independent researcher, Serbia
Ms. Natalija Petric, United Women, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ms. Lejla Heremic, Medica, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ms. Selma Begic, Foundation for Local Democracy, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ms. Aleksandra Kovalevska, National SOS line (Organization of Women of Skopje), F.Y.R of Macedonia
Ms. Nade Kachakova, Macedonian Women’s Rights Center – Shelter Center, F.Y.R of Macedonia

17.00 – 17.30

Plenary session

Day 2

Tuesday November 24, 2009

9.00 – 9.30

Session V: International proposals for indicators on violence against women

This session will provide an overview of recent recommendations and decisions by the United Nations Statistical Commission and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on indicators and methods for measuring violence against women.

Presentation:

Ms. Jessica Gardner, Statistician, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

- 9.30 – 11.00 Small group discussions on identification, collection of data and production of indicators for monitoring effectiveness of policies against VAW
- Presentations (for statisticians' workshop):
Ms. Lia Charekishvili, Head of Social Infrastructure Statistics Sub-division, Ministry of Economic Development of Georgia, Department of Statistics
Ms. Aleksandra Zec, Republika Srpska Institute of Statistics
- 11.00 – 11.30 *Coffee break*
- 11.30 – 13.00 Small group discussions on identification, collection of data and production of indicators for monitoring effectiveness of policies against VAW
- 13.00 – 14:00 Conclusions and ways forward: Toward a common framework of indicators to measure effectiveness of policies against VAW?