



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Workshop on Strengthening National Capacities to Collect Violence against Women  
Statistics in the Asia-Pacific Region

20-21 September 2010  
Bangkok

**REPORT ON THE WORKSHOP ON STRENGTHENING NATIONAL CAPACITIES TO  
COLLECT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN STATISTICS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC  
REGION\***

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\* The Report has been issued without formal editing.

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## **I. BACKGROUND**

1. The global United Nations development account project on “Enhancing capacities to eradicate violence against women through networking of local knowledge communities” was approved by the General Assembly in 2008 and is being implemented in the Asia-Pacific region by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Global collaborating partners include the Division for the Advancement of Women, Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and United Nations Regional Commissions in Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia.

2. Major global objectives of this interregional project are: (a) to strengthen stakeholder capacities to integrate collection, analysis and use of data on violence against women in their relevant national plans and programmes; (b) to improve the measurement of violence against women by building on the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair Group on Violence against Women Indicators on the use of common methodologies and indicators; and (c) to develop an interregional web portal on measurement of violence against women, in support of objectives (a) and (b).

3. To move the Asia-Pacific regional agenda on violence against women measurement forward, a Workshop on Strengthening National Capacities to Collect Violence against Women Statistics in the Asia-Pacific Region (hereafter: Workshop) was jointly organized by the Social Development Division and Statistics Division of ESCAP from 20 to 21 September 2010 in Bangkok. Background documentation and presentations given during the Workshop are available to download on ESCAP’s Social Development Division’s website under the following address: [http://www.unescap.org/sdd/meetings/SDD\\_SD\\_10/index.asp](http://www.unescap.org/sdd/meetings/SDD_SD_10/index.asp).

## **II. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP**

4. The main objectives of the Workshop were:

- A. To present an overview of global initiatives on statistical data and indicators of violence against women, with a special focus on the indicators on sexual and physical violence recommended by the United Nations Statistics Commission and additional indicators proposed by the Friends of the Chair Group on Violence against Women Indicators, in order to advocate for the use of a common list for indicators and a standard methodology to measure violence against women.
- B. To introduce a module developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) to measure violence against women as part of a national population survey or as an independent data collection exercise.
- C. To share experiences and lessons learned by Asia-Pacific countries in collecting, disseminating and using data on the nature, prevalence, causes, consequences and impact of violence against women.
- D. To encourage joint strategies and collaboration between national statistical offices and national women’s machineries to use recommended indicators and to strengthen the link between the production of statistics on violence against women and the use of statistics for advocacy and policy-making purposes.

- E. To introduce the planned regional web portal on violence against women measurement.

5. The Workshop was attended by 24 stakeholders from national women's machineries, national statistics offices and non-governmental organizations from nine Asia-Pacific countries: Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Solomon Islands, Thailand and Timor-Leste. In addition, two resource persons from the Philippines and Viet Nam introduced respective country experiences related to violence against women measurements. Ms. Henriette Jansen, a statistician with wide experience in gender statistics in the Asia-Pacific region, served as the key resource person. Representatives of intergovernmental and international organizations, including those from the United Nations system, also attended. The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this Report.

### **III. AGENDA**

- 6. The agenda for the Workshop was as follows:
  - A. Overview
  - B. Approaches to violence against women data collection
  - C. Improving violence against women statistics
  - D. Knowledge communities
  - E. Closing of the Workshop

### **IV. SESSION I: OVERVIEW**

#### **A. Overview**

7. Ms. Nanda Krairiksh, Director of the Social Development Division (SDD) and Ms. Haishan Fu, Director of the Statistics Division (SD) opened the Workshop noting that violence against women comprises one of the greatest violations of human rights. Evidence shows that violence against women affects not only millions of women who are victims but also their families, communities and whole societies. Undermining the active participation of women in society also undermines national development efforts. Its harm can last a woman's lifetime and span generations with serious adverse effects on health, education and employment. Data are key to catalyze and monitor progress as well as to support country-level planning and local accountability in implementing international mandates, including gender specific mandates such as the Beijing Platform for Action and Millennium Development Goal 3, which is on gender equality. Data identifies areas which need further attention and contribute to the design of appropriate evidence-based policies to overcome challenges. National Statistical Offices have a key role to play in collecting data on violence against women, while National Women's Machineries have an equally important role to play by making use of this data for policy formulation, advocacy and implementation. The Workshop aimed to encourage National Statistical Offices and National Women's Machineries to look into ways to further refine statistics on violence against women and their use in policy formulation and national commitments to advance gender equality. In particular, participants were encouraged to think about appropriate regional and national

approaches to improve violence against women statistics and their dissemination and use, so that as a region, the global agenda on eliminating violence against women can be taken forward.

8. Following the opening, the secretariat presented some of the key global milestones achieved in addressing violence against women: the Declaration of Violence against Women adopted by the General Assembly in 1993; the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women in 1994; the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995; the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000; and the General Assembly Resolution on “Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of Violence against Women” in 2006. Despite these advances, lack of data on violence against women and its detrimental effects on individuals and communities hamper efforts by policymakers to, inter alia, take action, monitor and understand the nature, prevalence, causes and consequences of violence against women.

9. The secretariat noted that in recent years, attention to the need for accurate, reliable and comparable data on violence against women had increased. This included a focus on addressing challenges such as dealing with the different sources of data used for quantification as well as ethical and safety concerns. To this end the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on the indicators on Violence against Women was established in 2008. In the same year, the Secretary General’s UNiTE to End Violence against Women Campaign was launched. The second of the Campaign’s five main objectives to be reached by 2015 focuses on strengthening data collection on the prevalence of the various forms of violence against women and girls.

#### **B. Availability and sources of data on violence against women**

10. Ms. Jansen delivered a presentation on the availability of data on violence against women. She noted that in the Asian-Pacific region Bangladesh, Japan, New Zealand, Samoa and Thailand had participated in the World Health Organization Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence, while China, Indonesia, Kiribati, Maldives, Solomon Islands, Turkey, Vanuatu and Viet Nam had adapted the WHO multi-country study methodology or conducted national surveys or studies on violence against women.

11. Ms. Jansen reported on the results from some Asian-Pacific countries using WHO multi-country study methodology, covering: (a) types of violence against women measured, such as physical and sexual violence and emotional abuse; (b) prevalence of different types of violence against women; (c) issues related to women accepting violence, stigma and silence; and (d) violence against women as learned behaviour.

### **V. SESSION II: APPROACHES TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN DATA COLLECTION**

#### **A. Methods of data collection on violence against women**

12. Representatives from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Solomon Islands presented their national experiences on generating data on violence against women. Ms. Aziza Parvin, Joint Director, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Demography and Health Wing, Bangladesh, reported that the records on violence against women in her country were based on data primarily obtained from national demographic and health surveys.

13. In contrast, as presented by Mr. Tahir Ehsan, Director, Gender Crime Centre, National Police Bureau, Ministry of Interior, Pakistan widely employed data primarily generated from administrative records. The Government of Pakistan established the Gender Crime Centre in the National Police Bureau in 2006, which gathers, collates and analyzes data on cases of violence against women. The data is then used, inter alia, to assist policymakers in developing policies addressing violence against women. The National Police Bureau has also launched a countrywide Gender Responsive Policing Project in order to improve the gender responsiveness of the police organization.

14. Ms. Ethel Falu Sigimanu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs presented on Solomon Islands' experiences from its Family Health and Safety Study Survey undertaken in 2008 and 2009. The survey replicated the World Health Organization's multi-country study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women (version 10). With a sample size of 3552 it covered all geographical locations of the Solomon Islands and contained both qualitative and quantitative components. According to Ms. Sigimanu, some of the benefits of this survey included: (a) improved knowledge about the prevalence and characteristics of violence against women; (b) strengthened national ownership of research data; (c) increased public support for policies and programmes to address violence against women; and (d) strengthened local capacity to assist victims of violence against women.

15. Following the presentations, a discussion ensued about what exactly is being attempted to measure: (a) the prevalence of violence against women; (b) the type of violence against women; (c) gender-based violence; and/or (d) domestic violence.

### **B. Challenges around measuring violence against women**

16. Commenting on the country presentations above, Ms. Jansen addressed some of the challenges identified in various studies in accurately measuring the prevalence of violence against women. Broadly speaking, there are two sources of data on violence against women. One source is data provided by administrative records, such as records from police, courts, hospitals and crisis centres. The second source is data from population-based surveys. The population-based surveys can either be dedicated surveys on violence against women, such as the WHO surveys, or surveys which add a module or a short set of questions on violence against women, such as the Demographic and Health Survey.

17. Ms. Jansen highlighted the importance of understanding the potential and limitations of the two methodologies in terms of the data's representativeness. Service based data, such as police records, do not capture the real scope of violence against women committed in a given population. Rather, they convey exactly how many cases of violence against women are reported to the police. Studies show that few women report partner violence to authorities; thus, service records do not reflect the prevalence or characteristics of violence against women in a given population.

18. For population based surveys, the accuracy of estimates of violence against women prevalence depends on a range of issues. For instance, prevalence figures on violence are highly sensitive to methodological issues, such as definitions of violence and the design of survey questionnaires, and therefore difficult to compare between settings. Furthermore, population-based research on violence against women raises major issues of safety and ethics, which are discussed below under *C. Ethical and safety issues around collecting data on Violence against Women*. However, a well designed population based survey, which takes limitations into account, can provide results useful for understanding the magnitude and

characteristics of violence, risk and protective factors, and also be able to measure associations with health, economic implications and crime reporting.

19. A further point briefly discussed with reference to population based surveys, was conducting a dedicated survey on violence against women versus a module. If the objectives of the survey are for instance, to raise awareness and influence policy, usually a module would suffice; but if the objective is to monitor trends, contribute to indicators, compare between countries, understand more about types of violence, specific factors and risks, then a dedicated survey would be suitable. Using a module has certain challenges as well, such as finding a suitable survey to append with, sample issues and sample representativeness, and the need for special enumerator training.

20. The participants observed that the population based surveys that have been conducted by countries focus on domestic violence, especially intimate partner violence, and noted the importance of expanding the scope of data collection to other forms of violence against women, such as stalking, cyber stalking, and other non-domestic forms of violence against women.

### **C. Ethical and safety issues around collecting data on violence against women**

21. There are a number of ethical and safety issues encountered when collecting data on VAW, such as issues related to consent, confidentiality, anonymity and the safety of respondents and the research/interview team. Study designs must take ethical and safety issues into consideration, in order to minimize distress caused to the participants and research/interview team, prevent an escalation of violence due to participation in the survey, and minimize under-reporting of violence.

22. To illustrate issues of ethics and safety, Ms. Nguyen Thi Viet Nga from the Social and Environmental Statistics Department, General Statistics Office of the Government of Viet Nam, presented Viet Nam's recent experience in collecting data on violence against women. The methodology was a population based household survey with face to face interviews with women only using structured questionnaires. It was modelled on the World Health Organization's multi-country study (version 10) with some deviations. Interviews were conducted with 4838 women in 63 provinces in Vietnam. Direct objectives of the survey included to obtain reliable estimates of prevalence and patterns of violence against women in Viet Nam and to document associations with health outcomes of violence against women. With regards to indirect objectives, the survey aspired to, amongst others, build research capacity of all involved research team members and fieldworkers and to contribute to cross-sector collaboration.

23. The survey took precautionary measures in order to address a number of safety and ethical issues. These were:

- (a) to only interview one woman per household;
- (b) careful selection of interview location, preventing participants from seeing each other and/or other members of the community;
- (c) careful naming of survey and wording of questions;
- (d) to not disclose the survey's content to non-participants, including local government officials and community workers;
- (e) to leave a local area immediately after completion of interviews in order not to be drawn into conversations about the survey and its content; and

(f) stringent selection and training criteria for interviewers, including VAW awareness training.

#### **D. Global initiatives and indicators**

24. The secretariat presented an overview of United Nations initiatives on violence against women measurements, including United Nations mandates on violence against women statistics and previous and on-going work conducted by the United Nations system. The initiatives presented aim to: (a) increase the systematic collection and analysis of data on violence against women; (b) to ensure greater comparability of data across countries and regions; (c) to enhance national capacity for data collection, dissemination and use; (d) advocacy work on eliminating violence against women; and (e) and policy formulation on eliminating violence against women.

25. Participants were informed about the Friends of the Chair Group on Violence against Women Indicators. Australia, Bangladesh, China, Thailand and Turkey from the Asia-Pacific region are members of this Group. The Group had in 2009 proposed a set of six statistical indicators on physical, sexual and intimate partner violence, which were adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission as an interim set. The guiding principles used for evaluating the indicators were: (a) ease to measure and interpret; (b) relevance and accuracy; and (c) universal applicability. After a further meeting of the Group in December 2009, the interim set of statistical indicators was expanded to a set of nine indicators to include psychological violence, economic violence and female genital mutilation. This was constituted as a set of core indicators. Additional statistical indicators that were proposed are (a) economic violence (in settings such as the work environment); (b) early marriage / union; (c) forced marriage, irrespective of the age of the bride; (d) experience of abuse during childhood; and (e) trafficking of women. Three indicators were identified that required further work, namely, femicide, spousal homicide and stalking.

### **VI. SESSION III: IMPROVING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN STATISTICS**

#### **A. Frameworks and mechanisms**

26. The secretariat presented on national statistical coordination, emphasizing its importance in improving violence against women statistics in countries. The need for meaningful and effective linkages among various entities and units within the national statistical system (NSS) was underscored while noting that this system includes not only data producers, data users and data suppliers, but also relevant ministries, legislative bodies, the media, and research and academic institutions. Organizational units and managers play an active role in contributing to various processes, such as those of priority setting, effective utilization of common resources, harmonization and integration of statistics and the use of common standards. The importance of political will; the need for a framework to mandate the production and dissemination of a minimum set of gender statistics; the need for institutionalization of the chosen mechanism; and the need for producers and users of data to work together were also highlighted. Reasons for undertaking statistical coordination include:

- (a) to ensure a maximum of integration in the statistical process and in its outputs;
- (b) to realize the full potential of personnel and other resources in providing quality services;

- (c) to promote the use of appropriate and effective methods in the collection and production of statistics;
- (d) to apply common standards and best methodology;
- (e) to identify and define statistical priorities and requirements;
- (f) to meet the demand for statistics effectively and efficiently;
- (g) to identify gaps in national statistics; and
- (h) to promote statistical development.

27. Ms. Jessamyn Encarnacion from the Social Statistics Office of the National Statistics Coordination Board of the Philippines introduced the Philippine Statistical System. She noted that as the system is decentralized, with many governmental agencies generating statistics, there is a need for a coordinating mechanism. This role is being played by the National Statistical Coordination Board, which serves as the highest policy-making and coordinating body on statistical matters in the Philippines, including coordinating data generation on violence against women. The Board had, amongst others, institutionalized the preparation and/or compilation of a number of reports and publications on sex disaggregated data, including violence against women. Furthermore, as a subsidiary structure to the Board, the Interagency Committee on Gender Statistics was created in 2002 in order to serve as a forum to discuss and resolve statistical issues and concerns towards improvement in the generation, dissemination, and utilization of gender statistics.

#### **B. Improving violence against women statistics at country level**

28. In order to improve violence against women statistics at country level, small group discussions identifying main weaknesses in data generation and corresponding priority areas for capacity development were conducted. Weaknesses identified by the groups included: (a) duplication of data; (b) misclassifications (i.e. violence against women were classified in home accident statistics); (c) underreporting; (d) lack of awareness; (e) lack of resources; (f) lack of capacity; (g) lack of political and organizational commitment; and (h) lack of an enabling environment. Both national and regional priority areas for action highlighted, were: (a) increasing coordination, including legislation and establishing a coordinating mechanism; (b) standardizing the definition of VAW; (c) providing VAW awareness training; (d) institutionalizing statistical capacity building, including through regular training and development of training materials; (e) developing user-friendly guidelines on VAW data collection; (f) developing policy frameworks for collecting and analyzing VAW data; and (h) formulating and implementing statistic development plans on violence against women measurement.

### **VII. SESSION IV: KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITIES**

29. The secretariat provided an overview on the role of an online knowledge community to build knowledge sharing on violence against women statistics. In particular, it introduced a United Nations interregional initiative to create an online knowledge community for information sharing and collaboration on violence against women, using the confluence platform. Two other initiatives were presented as good practices on online collaboration to strengthen networks and campaigns in this area. The Association for Progressive Communications presented its online international campaign to “Take back the Tech! To End Violence against Women”, that was used as an advocacy platform to mobilize support, channel strategies into action and respond to local priorities on violence against women. In addition, UNIFEM (now part of UN Women) made available information on its virtual knowledge centre to end violence against women and girls. This provides guidance on how

to work on the issue, good practice examples, as well as recommended trainings and other practical tools for implementation.

30. Participants recognized the added value and contribution of such knowledge tools to the work on violence against women. It was noted that this technology had been instrumental for women to communicate their problems and seek help, as well as to spread digital stories and house campaigns and actions. The use of “safe spaces” on the internet was vital to ensure the confidentiality and safety of women in these efforts.

31. Participants also recognized the use of online knowledge networks in the sharing of good practices, in particular on specific technical issues. One participant commented that it would be useful to share information on the technical experiences and logistics from countries that had conducted violence against women surveys, ranging from the appropriate sample size for different population sizes and countries, to the costs of interviews.

32. Whilst the importance of online knowledge networks was recognized, it was also pointed out that many populations, particularly in the Pacific, may not have access to such networks and information due to limited internet access. It was noted that alternative forms of communication should be identified in such cases.

## **VIII. SESSION V: CLOSING**

### **A. Tour de table**

33. A tour de table was conducted during the wrap-up session where participants shared their lessons learned from the workshop. Overall, participants thanked the ESCAP secretariat for introducing new ways of thinking on violence against women statistics, as well as identifying mechanisms to eradicate violence against women.

Some of the main lessons learned as identified by the participants were:

- (a) increased awareness of the lack of data throughout all Asia-Pacific countries on violence against women;
- (b) the need to explore other sources of violence against women data, other than relying on police records, and furthermore recognizing the actual limitations of police records, as they did not reflect the entire picture of violence against women;
- (c) the need to take into account new forms of measurement, such as through online methods, and to look beyond conventional techniques;
- (d) men should be viewed as partners in prevention and thus not only part of the problem, but also part of the solution;
- (e) the possibility to obtain relevant data, as the case of Viet Nam had shown, while prioritizing the safety and privacy of respondents to the survey;
- (f) the possibility of further learning through the creation of global knowledge communities;
- (g) the importance of coordination of different partners, such as between National Statistical Offices, National Women’s Machineries, in order to operationalize survey results as policy action; and
- (h) the need to include information on violence against women into existing training programmes.

34. Participants appreciated the timeliness and usefulness of the workshop as several countries were in the process of planning violence against women surveys. Participants further expressed an increased motivation to ensure that accurate and reliable data on violence against women is generated.

### **B. Priorities for follow-up action**

35. Summarizing discussions and input from participants during the workshop and as reflected in this report, some key priorities for follow-up action were identified and presented by the secretariat.

#### ***1. National coordination***

36. The importance of increasing national coordination was highlighted. Linkages were needed within different data generating organizations and data user organizations, as well as externally between providers of data, users of data for policy making and users of data for advocacy purposes.

#### ***2. Conceptual and technical issues***

37. Concerns were raised with reference to technical challenges of data generation on violence against women. These included issues of definitions and problems related to underreporting and duplication. More work was needed to address these concerns.

#### ***3. Regional and subregional cooperation***

38. A need for greater regional and/or subregional coordination and support in areas such as capacity development and sharing of information and good practices, including on the employment of information and communication technologies, was underscored. In this regard, the development of an online knowledge community with a section dedicated to the Asian and Pacific region was seen as a step in the right direction that needed to be followed-up.

#### ***4. Financing***

39. The ongoing issue of financing, particularly donor dependence and resource constraints, was described as limiting factors to generating good data on violence against women. More work was needed to find ways of ensuring adequate financing of violence against women measurements.

#### ***5. Data for what?***

40. More discussions are needed to identify how data on violence against women can be used for social change to address the underlying factors of gender inequality and lack of women's empowerment contributing to violence against women. This includes strategies on how to convey findings of violence against women data to the wider public for advocacy purposes.

41. The secretariat concluded by thanking all participants for their valuable contributions to the Workshop and indicated that more information on the United Nations interregional

online knowledge community would be forthcoming. In addition, a six month follow-up evaluation would be conducted.

## **ANNEX**

### **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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### **SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)**

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#### **INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)**

Ms. Sireerat Bunnag, Project Coordinator, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, TOT Building 6, 89/2 Chaengwattana Road, Laksi, Bangkok 10210, Tel: 66-2-574-9326, Fax: 66-2-574-9328, Email: sireerat.bunnag@itu.int

## **NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

### **ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS WOMEN'S NETWORKING SUPPORT PROGRAMME (APC WNSP)**

Ms. Lalaine P. Viado, MDG 3 Regional Coordinator for Asia, APC WNSP, Unit 15 Ayala Heights Townhomes, Mactan Road, Ayala Heights Village, Old Balara, Quezon City 1119, Philippines, Tel: 63-2-931-9020, Email: lalaine@apcwomen.org

### **FIJI WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTRE (FWCC)**

Ms. Edwina Kotoisuva, Education and Training Officer, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, 88 Gordon Street, Suva, Fiji, Tel: 679-331-3300, Fax: 679-331-3650, Email: fwcc@connect.com.fj

### **SOLOMON ISLANDS PLANNED PARENTHOOD ASSOCIATION (SIPPA)**

Mr. Michael Salini, Executive Director, Solomon Islands Planned Parenthood Association, P.O. Box 554, Lombi Cress, Honiara, Solomon Islands, Tel: 67-7-229 91, 27554, Email: msalini@fpsi.com.sb

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## **RESOURCE PERSONS**

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Ms. Emma Fulu, Research Specialist, Partners for Prevention, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, UN Service Building, Rajdamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok, Tel: 66-2-244-8150

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Ms. Wanphen Sreshthaputra	Social Affairs Officer, Social Development Division
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