

**Commission on the Status of Women  
Fifty-fourth session  
1-12 March**

**Interactive expert panel on  
“Unite to End Violence Against Women”**

Thursday, 11 March 2010, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

**ISSUES PAPER**

**I. Background**

The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, identified violence against women as one of the 12 critical areas of concern that required urgent action to achieve the goals of equality, development and peace. International and regional human rights treaties, documents emanating from United Nations conferences and summits and declarations/resolutions adopted by United Nations bodies, further elaborate States’ obligations and commitments to address violence against women. In response, there has been a growing momentum and commitment to preventing and addressing violence against women in all its forms and manifestations.

The Commission on the Status of Women considered the question of violence against women as part of its follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, including in 1998 and 2007. It held dialogues with the Statistical Commission and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on different aspects of violence against women. In 2009, the Statistical Commission adopted an interim set of indicators on violence against women. The General Assembly has adopted comprehensive and action-oriented resolutions calling for intensified action by all stakeholders to eliminate all forms of violence against women (resolutions 61/143, 62/133, 63/155, 64/137).

The Security Council addressed the question of women, peace and security in its landmark resolution 1325 (2000) in a comprehensive manner. Subsequent resolutions further elaborated on the issue of ending sexual violence in armed conflict (resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009)) and on women’s engagement post conflict reconstruction and peace building (resolution 1889 (2009)).

In 2006, the Secretary-General issued his in-depth study on all forms of violence against women; and in February 2008, he launched his campaign, *UNiTE to End Violence against Women*. The campaign extends through 2015 and coincides with the target date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The campaign calls for five key outcomes to be achieved by 2015 in all countries: the adoption and enforcement of national laws, in accordance with international human rights standards; the adoption and implementation of multi-sectoral national plans of action; the establishment of data collection and analysis systems; the establishment of national and local campaigns; and systematic efforts to address sexual violence in conflict situations. In November 2009, the

Secretary-General launched his Network of Men Leaders to spearhead advocacy and action at the community, national, regional and global levels.

## **II. Critical issues**

Over the past two decades, States have undertaken and/or supported a range of measures to prevent and address violence against women, including strengthening legal, policy and institutional frameworks; improving availability of services for victims/survivors of violence; engaging multiple stakeholders to prevent violence against women; and enhancing data collection and analysis on violence against women.

Despite these efforts, violence against women persists. It occurs in all countries and regions, in both the public and private spheres, and in peacetime as well as in conflict and its aftermath. Such violence takes many different forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional, as well as economic abuse and exploitation. New forms of violence against women are emerging. Certain groups of women continue to be exposed to higher levels of violence, including indigenous women, young women, and those from rural areas or ethnic minorities.

