

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-first session

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PANEL I

**Summary of the Expert Group Meeting on the Elimination of All Forms of
Discrimination and Violence against the Girl Child
(Florence, Italy, 25-28 September 2006)**

Madame Chair, distinguished guests and participants, fellow panelists, and colleagues:

Good morning, I have the honor to present a summary of the outcome of the Expert Group Meeting on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.

1. The Expert Group Meeting was organized with a view for participants to share lessons learned and critically examine the issue, and to provide concrete policy recommendations for governments, the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders.

2. The Meeting was organized by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in collaboration with UNICEF and hosted by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Center in Florence, Italy, in September 2006. It was attended by over 40 participants, including 15 independent experts and 19 observers from around the world.

3. The Meeting was structured around four main conceptual issues related to the girl child: **(i) protection, (ii) girls in especially vulnerable situations, (iii) empowerment, and (iv) institutional arrangements to accelerate elimination of discrimination and violence against the girl child.**

4. The Expert Group identified some underlying causes for the discrimination and violence against girls. We concluded that:

Firstly, people in the society—men and women, girls and boys alike—internalize gender biases and stereotypes and rigid gender roles that place girls on the lowest rung of the hierarchy in family and society. This internalization, reflected in traditional practices and everyday behavior, causes people to

their work and livelihoods, their environment, and their enforced seclusion, and, at times, being held in detention or captivity. These seven groups are:

Girls facing harmful social and traditional practices, including those

There should also be more linkages and synergy among existing human rights instruments and their bodies, in particular between CRC and CEDAW.

Bring national and local legal standards in line with international standards and make sure that these standards are implemented at the sub-national and local levels. Governments must repeal all existing laws that discriminate against women and the girl child, such as laws on inheritance, property ownership, divorce, and minimum age for marriage. Law enforcement generally needs to be stepped up, along with formulation of national and local policies, resource allocations and necessary programs.

Effective policymaking and programming require accurate data. There is a need to **increase support and funding to gender-responsive research to identify groups of girls at high risk of discrimination and violence, using a life-cycle approach.** Many groups of girls facing violence and discrimination are not properly counted. Often data collected are not properly disaggregated and not properly analyzed. This is in part due to lack of gender sensitivity among researchers and program staff. Research should be gender-responsive in design, methodology and data collection. To generate more gender-and context-specific information, the data should be disaggregated by vital indicators such as age, sex, marital status, family characteristics, ethnicity, geographical origin, and so on. More investment should be made to train program staff to conduct better gender analysis and gender mainstreaming.

