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Statement by HE Mr Stefan Wallin, Minister at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of Finland

CSW52 side-event "Getting the Facts to Make the Change: the International Violence Against Women Survey"

Our discussions at the Commission on the Status of Women have these past days focused on the topic of financing for gender equality and gender budgeting. From a financial perspective, violence against women is tremendously expensive. According to Finnish studies, the annual combined direct costs of violence against women exceed 90 million euros annually in Finland. The costs connected to violence consist not merely of hospitalisation or trauma costs or costs attributed to the criminal justice system, but there are social costs, loss off work and diminished capacities. In addition there are of course the long-term emotional consequences that affect future generations and the whole society at large.

Violence against women, however, is a universal phenomenon that affects women in every part of the world. I am therefore very pleased to see the launch of the Secretary General's multi-year, global campaign to end violence against women. The importance of this initiative cannot be highlighted enough and I want to ensure you of Finland's support for the campaign.

As a minister at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of Finland I am responsible for gender-equality issues. I consider violence against women a serious constraint for the realisation of gender equality. International and national research shows that women are disproportionately victims of male-perpetrated violence. It is important to see this violence as a serious and multifaceted social problem, address this violence holistically and to see it as an integral part of promoting gender equality.

Violence against women can take many forms but there is agreement that it encompasses acts that result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm to women, taking place at home or in the community, or on behalf of the State. The language of the Beijing platform of action is thus still very relevant and valid – violence against women is a violation of women's human rights and we all have a responsibility in addressing and preventing it.

While we have come a long way in recognising the scope, nature and consequences of this problem, there is still a lot of work to be done. One of the most crucial areas of work is research and data collection. While several studies have been conducted in different parts of the world, there still exists a need to strengthen our knowledge of women's experiences of male violence. We need first-hand data to better understand

new Government Action Plan for Gender Equality the reduction of violence against women will be one of the main objectives.

Finland also takes part in the Council of Europe campaign to stop violence against women. This year Finland will organise an advocacy campaign on gender-based