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Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-seventh session

4-15 March 2013

Agenda items 3 (a) (i) and 3 (c)

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
and to the twenty-third special session of the General
Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality,
development and peace for the twenty-first century”:**

**Implementation of strategic objectives and action in
critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives:
priority theme: elimination and prevention of all forms of
violence against women and girls**

Gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters

Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against



Department of Reproductive Health and Research at the World Health Organization, Claudia Garcia Moreno Esteva.

3. Participants voiced concern that violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive human rights violations in the world, rooted in structural gender inequality and discrimination. Violence against women and girls occurs in peacetime and conflict, in private and public spheres. Different speakers discussed a range of forms and manifestations of violence against women and girls, as well as new and emerging forms of violence, including those related to developments in technology, such as cyberbullying.

4. A holistic approach is required to address violence against women effectively. Such an approach should actively involve all segments of society and include legal and policy reforms and measures for prevention and protection of survivors, as well as data collection, analysis and research. Strong political will and sufficient resources are also necessary. To this end, several countries have placed gender-responsive budgeting at the core of their work to address and prevent violence against women, while others stressed the importance of regional and international cooperation.

5. Speakers noted that although progress has been made in the provision of support services to victims/survivors, more work needs to be done in the area of prevention. To date, the approach to prevention remains fragmented, mainly focusing on educational and awareness-raising initiatives and other isolated activities. Efforts to prevent violence against women and girls should address its root causes, including socioeconomic gender inequalities and the historical and patriarchal structures that control women's sexuality and reproductive rights. Such efforts should be carried out in a comprehensive and coordinated manner and be mutually reinforcing so as to have a sustained effect.

6. Effective prevention requires a comprehensive legal framework that protects the human rights of women and girls, including their sexual and reproductive rights. National constitutions should guarantee gender equality and the human rights of women and girls, in line with the commitments that States have made through international conventions and instruments. Enshrining the principle of gender equality in interim constitutions of States in situations of political transition was seen as especially important. Concern was expressed that while women had often played a crucial part in important social movements, most recently during the Arab spring, they were marginalized or excluded from subsequent nation-building processes. It was stressed that women must participate meaningfully in the drafting of national constitutions and in various decision-making processes, including in conflict and post-conflict contexts, so as to

