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**Expert Group Meeting on indicators to measure violence against women**  
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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. This paper is prepared for the UN Expert Group Meeting on indicators to measure violence against women. The Expert Group Meeting is intended to support the work of the Statistical Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women in developing 'a set of possible indicators on violence against women in order to assist States in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women'.

2. The paper includes: (i) an overview of existing major initiatives on indicators to measure violence against women; (ii) an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of those initiatives; (iii) proposes criteria for the identification of a possible set of indicators on violence against women; (iv) summarises options and provides recommendations for a possible set of indicators to support countries to measure the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women; and (v) addresses the related data collection requirements and constraints and opportunities for overcoming these.

## **II. INDICATORS**

### **A. What are indicators?**

3. Indicators summarise complex data into a form that is meaningful for policy makers. The focus here is on indicators and statistics that measure the 'scope, prevalence and incidence' of violence against women. It does not address indicators of policy developments, which are considered elsewhere (UN DAW 2005b; Kelly 2007).

### **B. Purpose of indicators**

4. Indicators constitute a key link between an evidence base and policy making. There have been many policy innovations to reduce and eliminate violence against women; much political good-will; and much rhetoric. In order to decide whether initiatives are having a positive impact it is necessary to know whether the situation is deteriorating or improving. There are many forms and types of knowledge about the nature of violence against women and the policies to stop this. Often these data are too complicated to support the decision-making of policy makers without the input of considerable time and expertise. The purpose of indicators is that they provide a simple summary of a complex picture, abstracting and presenting in a clear manner the most important features needed to support decision-making (Berger-Schmitt and Jankowitsch 1999; Luxembourg Presidency 2005; UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean 2004; Statistics Canada 2002; Walby 2005a).

### **C. General criteria for indicators**

5. Several criteria for the selection of the indicators have been developed (Berger-Schmitt and Jankowitsch 1999; UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean 2004; Statistics Canada 2002). In general, indicators should:

- Summarise complex data;

- Be unambiguous and easy to interpret;
- Enable an assessment as to whether an improvement or deterioration has occurred;
- Be meaningful and relevant to policy makers, service providers and the wider public;
- Be capable of being supported by reliable and robust quantitative data;
- Be neither so many as to confuse, nor so few as to mislead;
- Be available at regular intervals and be comparable over time;
- Be comparable between countries and population groups.

#### **D. Specific criteria for indicators of violence against women**

6. In addition to the general criteria for any indicator, there are criteria specific to the field of violence against women. While there is consensus on the criteria, there has been varying resolution of the tensions contained within them. The best way to resolve these tensions is discussed below using academic, statistical and policy literature. The criteria include:

- Inclusive scope of the full range of types of violence, as noted in the UN definition, but not so specialised as to prevent comparison between countries, thereby balancing local specificity with international comparability;
- Meaningful measurement of the extent of the violence, using the appropriate balance between the concepts of prevalence and incidence;
- Meaningful measurement of severity of the violence, especially in relation to its impact.

7. There are two technical considerations for the indicators:

- Consistent identification of the time period: both a longer period (for example, life-time or since 16 years old) and a more recent period, (for example, last year);
- Consistent identification of the same population sub-set, e.g. age and marital status.

8. There are two further criteria relating to policy and data collection:

- Consistent with indicators in adjacent fields, so as to facilitate the mainstreaming of violence against women into mainstream data collection and policy development, while still being sensitive to the nuances in the specific field of violence against women;
- Practicality of data collection; availability of data and existing use of indicators.

### **III. OVERVIEW OF INITIATIVES ON INDICATORS**

9. Proposals for indicators of violence against women have been developed by a number of policy oriented governmental and non-governmental bodies. In addition, surveys of violence against women often include 'headline' figures when reports are published, although their main purpose is usually a more rounded detailing of the violence than a focus on indicators. Further, various bodies are in the process of developing indicators, including the UN Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (Kelly et al 2006), Eurostat (European Commission 2006a), and MEASURE Evaluation (2007).

## A. Policy proposals for indicators

10. This section focuses on proposals for indicators from: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2003); UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Alméras, Bravo, Milosavjevic, Montaña and Rico 2004); European Union (Presidencia de la Unión Europea 2002); Statistics Canada (2002); the US Centers for Disease Control and National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (Saltzman et al 2002); and the UK Home Office (2005). In most cases these bodies have proposed indicators not only on the 'scope, prevalence and incidence' of violence against women but also on policy development. Only the former are reported here, because this report's focus. The section starts with a discussion as to why criminal and administrative statistics are an inadequate basis for indicators.

### *Criminal and Administrative Statistics*

11. The extent of violent crime reported to the police or where criminal convictions are obtained are sometimes used as indicators of violent crime. However, for two main reasons, this approach is rarely recommended for indicators of violence against women. First, in most countries data on violent crime does not include the gender of the perpetrator and the victim. Hence it is not possible to use either criminal statistics or reports to the police as the main basis for indicators of gender-based violence against women. Second, criminal statistics and administrative data are in general unsuitable for the measurement of the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women because the majority of women who are victims of violence do not report this to any authority. This means that the majority of incidents of violence against women are not recorded in any administrative database. Hence it is necessary to conduct surveys in order to ascertain the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women.

12. There are two types of possible exceptions to this analysis. One concerns crime categories that are predominantly concerned with gender-based violence against women. One example of this is rape; but this is seldom reported to the police and is only a small proportion of overall violence against women. A further potential exception is in those few, but increasing, jurisdictions where domestic violence is named as a specific crime (e.g. Sweden), but since most incidents of domestic violence are not addressed using this crime category in these countries, it is not a recommended basis for indicators. A second type of exception concerns homicide. Homicide is different from most crimes in that in most instances it comes to the attention of the police and is recorded. Since the number of deaths of women from gender based violence cannot be ascertained by survey, police and crime statistics are the only possible sources. However, while the sex of the victim is often reported, it is very rare (the UK is an exception) that the analysis is done and reported as to whether the death of the women is gender based (e.g. domestic or rape-murder, but not due to robbery).

13. The remainder of the report considers indicators based on statistical data, since this is the most important form of data to support indicators of violence against women.

### *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

14. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2003) reported on guidelines for prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against refugees, returnees



Programme (2005: 1) (OJ C53 of 3.3.2005, p.1) welcomes the Commission initiative ‘to establish European instruments for collecting, analysing and comparing information on crime and victimisation and their respective trends in Member States, using national statistics and other sources of information as agreed indicators’. The action plan (European Commission 2006a) includes the development of two sets of indicators: ‘Objective 12. Measuring violence against women’ and ‘Objective 13. Measuring domestic violence.’ There are discussions on the development of these indicators on violence against women and domestic violence for the EU involving Eurostat and HEUNI, but no proposals in the public domain.

#### *Statistics Canada*

19. Statistics Canada (2002) recommends indicators for six themes, of which two concern ‘scope, prevalence and incidence’:

- Severity and prevalence of violence against women
- Impact of violence against women

20. The report provides detailed data, drawn from two large scale national surveys. Much is focused on spousal violence, including both marital and common-law unions. The measures of severity include a modified Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS). Prevalence is based on any experience of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16 and in the last year. Impact measures include self-reported psychological impact and fear, physical injury, whether injuries were medically treated, whether there was time off work, and the economic cost of violence. There is a separate section on homicide, using data from sources other than surveys.

#### *US Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control*

21. Saltzman et al (2002) provide careful and detailed uniform definitions of intimate partner violence in order to promote consistency in the use of terminology and data collection, in a report sponsored by the US Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. The report is concerned with intimate partner violence, not the full range of violence against women. They recommend data on both prevalence and incidents:

- number of people (and their characteristics) affected by intimate partner violence
- number and type of intimate partner violence episodes (and associated injuries and other consequences)

#### *UK Home Office*

22. The UK Home Office (2005) has performance indicators for domestic violence. In addition to several concerning policy, two indicators concern its scope, prevalence and incidence:

- Number of domestic homicides (data available annually from *Criminal Statistics*);
- Headline prevalence of domestic violence (supported with data from the annual British Crime Survey Inter-Personal Violence module).

23. This is one of the few instances in which policy proposals for indicators are also supported by regularly collected data. However, these are not strictly indicators of violence against women in that they include men as well as women victims.

*Spain*

24. Within a set of around 100 mostly policy oriented indicators from Spain, one set concern the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women (Federal-Provincial-Territorial



**C. Indicators embedded in survey statistics**

25. There are many national surveys that report a range of statistics on violence against women (Walby and Allen 2001; Martinez and Schröttle et al 2006; Schröttle et al 2006), as well as a series of comparative surveys including the International Violence Against Women Survey in Australia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Mozambique and Switzerland) (HEUNI

surveys this was a one-off ad hoc event. None of the governmental sources cited the International Violence Against Women Survey as a source of statistics, even if it had taken place in that country.

#### **D. Reflections on the relationship between policy proposals for indicators and indicators embedded in surveys**

28. In general, with rare exceptions, there is a gap between proposals for indicators from the policy world and the development of detailed statistics in the context of surveys. Many of the proposals for indicators have not been applied to actual bodies of data; they remain aspirational, indicative of the direction of development along which policy makers would like to go. Much of the intent of the work in the developing surveys has been an interest in developing a breadth of knowledge about the nature of violence against women, rather than indicators for policy evaluation purposes. This is a gap that needs to be bridged.

### **III. OPTIONS IN DEVELOPING INDICATORS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

#### **A. Introduction**

29. In order to evaluate indicators on violence against women it is necessary:
- to specify the separate **dimensions** of the indicator that need to be defined;
  - to identify the **criteria** by which these options are to be assessed;
  - to identify the **range of options** on this dimension;
  - and to identify the **best option** after due consideration of the relevant evidence.
30. The **dimensions** of the indicators on the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women require the following dimensions to be defined:
- Definition of the types of violence.
  - Units for the measurement of prevalence and incidence.
  - The measurement of severity, including as a threshold.
  - The time period for the indicator.
  - Whether any restrictions are placed on the population of women included.
31. The **criteria** for assessment of the options of indicators include:
- Definition of violence: Inclusive scope of the full range of forms of violence, but not so specialised as to prevent comparison between countries, balancing local specificity with international comparability;
  - Measurement of the extent of the violence: using the appropriate balance between the concepts of prevalence and incidence;
  - Measurement of severity of the violence: to be meaningful especially in relation to impact.
  - Time period: consistency and accuracy in the identification of the time period: both a longer period, and a shorter recent period.
  - Population sub-set: Consistent identification of as full a population sub-set as possible, in relation to age and marital status, so as to ensure only technically essential exclusions.

- Consistency with indicators in adjacent fields, to facilitate the mainstreaming of violence against women into mainstream data collection and the full range of policy concerns, while still being sensitive to the nuances in the specific field of violence against women.

32. While some of the proposed indicators include a full specification of the full set of dimensions, many do not. Many policy bodies indicate the broad scope of a proposed indicator without its technical specification. Typically the surveys contain a wealth of information that allow for support of a range of different options along these dimensions; sometimes these are prioritised.

33. Each of the dimensions is now considered in turn. The discussion is composed of two parts: the identification of the range of options (from proposed indicators, surveys, and the academic and policy literature); the assessment of these options against specified criteria.

## **B. Definition of forms of violence**

34. *The major options for indicators*

- A single indicator that includes all of forms o

36. In developing the indicator, there is a tension between the separate naming of specific forms of violence against women and the use of more general categories. The greater the number of indicators, the wider the range of forms that can be separately identified. The detailing of the specificity of the form that violence might take has both the advantage of being close to the experiences of the women affected as well as the disadvantage of potentially being used to stigmatise more marginal communities. The separate identification of types of violence that are less common has the disadvantage that the small numbers that would be reported to a survey might not be statistically reliable for reporting and analysis. There is a data collection issue here: the larger the size of the sample in the survey, the more possible it is to make finely grained distinctions between the types of violence.

37. In response to these dilemmas, some proposals for indicators have focused narrowly on

preva



of incidence to underpin the operationalisation of the measurement of domestic violence will, on the same set of data, produce an appearance of only slightly gender imbalance, while the use of the concept of incidence to underpin its measurement will show greater gender inequality.

48. A second disadvantage of the use of prevalence to underpin measurement of the extent of domestic violence is that it is a specific measure developed in the specialised field of violence against women, and is hard to mainstream into adjacent policy domains. There are two major adjacent policy fields: crime and health. The crime field has been particularly important in relation to data collection on violence against women in North America and Europe, while perhaps, health is more important in the developing world. Crime, law and order are policy domains that are high on the political agenda and generally well resourced (Garland 2001); in many countries it is more prominent and better resourced than the specific field of violence against women (Kelly 1999). The mainstreaming of violence against women into the field of crime would be to include it in a more resource rich environment as compared with the specialised field of violence against women.

49. The mainstreaming of violence against women into the crime field would probably be assisted if the two fields were to use the same concepts underpinning the measurement of the extent of these crimes. However, the measurement of crime is underpinned by the concept of incidence not prevalence. Crime is counted as the number of separate crime incidents per unit of population, per unit of time (often one year). If a person is multiply victimised during the time period then these additional crimes are included in the crime count. The significance of violence against women within the crime field might be seen more easily if the measurement of violent crime against women and other forms of violent crime were to use the same basis. While the violence against women field uses prevalence and the crime field uses incidence, the field of violence against women is likely to remain more marginalised than if they used the same method of counting violent crime.

50. The significance of the crime field concerns not only policy development, but also data collection. While in many countries there has been a single one-off data collection exercise on violence against women, insofar as these are repeated, these have tended (but not exclusively) to be where there is an interest in collecting this data alongside crime more generally. Crime surveys are a significant possible source of resources for the routine repetition of surveys of violence against women. Most crime surveys where this integration has occurred, have asked questions about gender-based violence of men as well as of women. Insofar as there are substantial plans to conduct repeat surveys on gender-based violence, they tend to be crime surveys where men as well as women are asked the questions. This raises the issue of the advantages of incidence rather than prevalence with additional urgency.

51. There is a productive tension in the development of indicators between on the one hand the detailed appreciated of distinctive nuances within a framework specific to the expert VAW field, and on the other hand, the use of more general categories that facilitate addressing priorities within mainstream policy arenas. Early attempts at specifying indicators tended to the

justice. The counting of the number of incidents, rather than the prevalence rate, is the more usual approach in crime statistics. If domestic violence enters crime statistics as a 'course of conduct', then it counts as just one crime incident, even though there are usually several events. In this way, the repetition and frequency of the attacks disappears from view thereby leading to underestimates of the extent of violent crime and domestic violent crime in particular. It is important that the number of incidents is the main measure of extent of violence against women.

#### *Recommended options*

- life-time prevalence;
- annual rate of the number of incidents per 1,000 women.

### **D. Severity and impact**

#### *Major options*

- the nature of the action;
- frequency;
- injury: whether or not there is an injury, and if so its seriousness.

#### *Discussion*

53. It is important to have an indicator that captures the severity of the violence, as well as its extent. Most of the literature on severity has focused on domestic violence, and within this on physical violence; but this is not the only type of violence against women. The measurement of severity in relation to domestic violence will be considered first, and then the issue will be broadened to other types of violence.

#### Actions :

54. In relation to domestic violence, the most frequently used scaling of the severity of actions is that of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) (Straus 1979, 2007; Gelles and Straus 1990). First used in US surveys in 1975 and 1985, it has been included as an element, with minor or major modifications, in most later surveys that address domestic violence in detail including Statistics Canada (Johnson 1996), the World Health Organisation (Garcia-Moreno et al 2005), the International Violence Against Women Survey (Nevala 2005), DHS (Kishor and Johnson 2004) and many individual national surveys (Walby and Myhill 2001; UNECE 2006). The Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) consists of a list of items (slightly varied in different versions) of increasing levels of severity. The list is slightly varied in different versions (Straus 1979, 2007; Straus and Gelles 1990); the one reported here is that in Straus and Gelles (1990). The first items on the list are not considered acts of violence, but forms of verbal reasoning (A-C): A discussed an issue calmly; B got information to back up your/his/her side of things; C Brought in, or tried to bring in, someone to help settle things. The next set (D-J) are considered verbal aggression, but not violence: D insulted or swore at him/her/you; E sulked or refused to talk about an issue; F stomped out of the room or house or yard; G cried; H did or said something to spite him/her/you; I threatened to hit or throw something at him/her/you; J threw or smashed or hit or kicked something. The violent items are: K threw something at him/her/you; L pushed, grabbed, or shoved him/her/you; M slapped him/her/you; N Kicked, bit, or hit him/her/you with a fist; O Hit or tried to hit him/her/you with something; P Beat him/her/you up; Q Choked



him/her/you; R Threatened him/her/you with a knife or gun; S Used a knife or fired a gun. These violent items are divided into minor violence (K-M) and severe violence (N-S). Some later versions of the scale additionally include sexual violence, but the early ones did not.

55. Several problems have been identified with the Conflict Tactics Scale and with its deployment. There is concern that its use produces spurious gender symmetry. This is for at least three reasons including: the exclusion of sexual violence and stalking; the significance of meaning and context; the lack of congruency of behavioural actions with impact on the victim.

56. First, the early version of the scale was confined to physical domestic violence, excluding sexual violence and also stalking from an ex-partner; so it is not comprehensive (Dobash et al 1992; Johnson 1996). Although later versions of the scale did include an item on sexual violence, additional scales need to be used to capture the extent and range of sexual assault, stalking and other forms of domestic violence. Since women are almost all (though not entirely) the victims sexual violence (Walby and Allen 2004), its exclusion tilts the findings away from gender asymmetry. Its inclusion would show greater gender asymmetry in domestic violence.

57. Second, it does not take meaning and context sufficiently into account (Brush 1990; Dobash et al 1992; Smith 1994; Johnson 1996; Dobash and Dobash 2004). This criticism has several overlapping aspects. One is a preference for differentiating the intentions behind the action; it may be an initiation of aggression, or retaliation in response, or self-defence. It has been suggested that self-defence should be treated differently rather than identically with the initiation of aggression (Saunders 1988; Nazroo 1995; Dobash and Dobash 2004). A similar but slightly different aspect is concerned with the differential impact of the violence on women and men that is not sufficiently captured by the description of the act. For example, women are much more likely to be frightened and stay frightened than men as a consequence of acts of domestic violence (Mirrlees-Black 1999). This may mean that women are more likely to be controlled by the violence than men. The conclusion drawn here is that it is important to identify the

since prevalence would treat severe acts as equivalent with minor acts. Third, the more injurious effects of any given act by men than women (Walby and Allen 2004) is a reason not only not to use a prevalence measure, since prevalence would treat any act as equivalent with any other, but also for using injury as the measure of severity.

## Injury

60. The major alternative measure of severity to the CTS is injury: whether, and if so, the seriousness of the injuries. This is a victim-focused measure of the severity of the impact of the violence. The existence or not of any physical injury is part of such a scale. A further distinction may be made as to the seriousness of the injury; many countries recognise in their law some distinction between more or less serious violent crimes.

61. The use of injury as an impact measure has three advantages: it is immediately meaningful; it avoids the problem of the differential gender impact of the same action; and it enables easier linkage to mainstream policy concepts, especially those of crime and health.

62. To be comprehensive, indicators would ideally include forms of injury beyond physical injuries. This especially concerns the injury constituted by sexual violence and injuries to mental health. Rape and other forms of penetrative sexual assaults are very serious injuries in their own right, perhaps not needing to be further translated. Other forms of sexual assault might be considered minor injuries in this scaling. These might be considered as separate scales from those of physical injury or (if numbers are small) added into the categories of minor and major injuries. There are some forms of violence that are common in some countries and rare but not unknown in others, such as: female genital mutilation/cutting. These should be separate named categories of violence against women in those countries where this is a common form of violence against women, but in those where it is much less common they should be included in the category of serious injury, or homicide. They should be separately named in surveys in those countries where these practices are known, and the decision as to whether to aggregate into the generic category of serious injury or not should be taken when it is known whether the numbers are statistically significant or not. A more difficult issue is that of the mental health injuries that are a common consequence of violence against women but which might be difficult to operationalise in form suitable for a survey. More complex surveys might include measures developed in the mental health field, but this may go beyond reasonable expectations for international standards for a VAW population survey. The most severe form of injury is death. Obviously this data cannot be collected by a population survey. Homicide is, however, widely regarded as the most robust of the administrative, police or criminal justice system statistics in relation to violent crime. Statistics on homicide are made available in internationally comparable gender disaggregated form by the World Health Organisation (Krug et al 2002). However, there is no widespread breakdown as to whether the homicide was domestic or not. Since there can be no assumption that the homicide of women is intrinsically gender-based, it would be inappropriate to use 'femicide' as an indicator of violence against women.

63. One advantage of 'injury' as a measure of severity is that it facilitates the mainstreaming of violence against women into adjacent policy fields such as the criminal justice system and health. This is important since these fields are well established and generally more resource-rich than the policy fields of gender equality or violence against women.

64. There is a tension in the development of scaling the severity of domestic violence between on the one hand a specialised rating system that is sensitive to the nuances of this particular form of violence and on the other hand the use of a more generic rating system that is used in a wider range of policy fields. The Conflict Tactics Scale is an example of a specialised system of categories that is, so far, uniquely used in the field of domestic violence. Since it is unique to domestic violence, it is harder to mainstream violence against women into other policy fields that use different forms of scaling of severity than if the same scaling of severity is used. Since the scale is unique to domestic violence, it makes comparisons with other forms of violence, such as violent crime, more difficult. For example, estimating the extent of violent crime that is domestic is hindered by its distinctive conceptualisation and measurement.

#### Frequency

65. A further possible indicator of severity of violence against women is that of the frequency of the attack. The number of times that the same person is subject to violence is a measure of severity. This is different from the number of incidents per population unit, being rather the average number of incidents per person subject to the violence. The main advantage of such an indicator is that it is readily meaningful. However, there is a major disadvantage in that frequency overlaps with the concept of the extent of violence against women. If it is used in the measurement of the extent, it should not also be included in the measurement of severity.

66.

68. The life-time measures are important in establishing the scale of the problem, for consciousness raising and raising its priority (Garcia-Moreno et al 2005). It is important for those forms of violence that can occur only once in a life-time, and those that are unlikely to occur more than once in a life-time. The life time measure is perhaps the easiest time period to address in a survey and in the early stages of development of this field, where techniques are not sophisticated and resources not well developed. However, it is of little use in assessing the impact of policy change, which requires a shorter time period.

### *Discussion*

71. There is a distinction between restrictions on the age at which the violence took place and restrictions on the age of the respondent being questioned. The age at which the violence took place has been addressed above. This discussion concerns the age of the respondent: There are separate issues for lower age and upper age cut-off. The most important issue is consistency between surveys, rather than the exact ages selected. Most surveys have a lower cut off around adulthood, though the actual age varies, predominantly between 15 and 18. Many but far from all surveys have an upper cut off. The criteria for this include reproductive age of 49 (in some health surveys), to ability to use a computer unaided by interviewer of 59, with further ages representing various expectations of competence.

### *Recommended option*

- Age at which violence took place: to include all years.
- Age of respondent: 16-65 years old.

### *Marital and Cohabiting Status*

#### *Major options*

- Adult women regardless of marital status
- Currently married or partnered women
- Ever married or partnered women

### *Discussion*

72. Some surveys, especially where the focus is domestic violence, are restricted to women who are currently or ever have been married or cohabiting. This is unduly restrictive, since violence against women can take place outside of marriage and cohabitation.

### *Recommended option*

- No restrictions on marital status.

## **IV. SUMMARY OF MAJOR OPTIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR INDICATORS**

73. This final section first lists the major and recommended options for each of the dimensions of indicators: definitions of types of violence; units for the measurement of extent; severity and impact; time period; and population sub-groups. Next it integrates the recommended options on each dimension into proposed indicators that are specified on each of these dimensions.

## **Major and recommended options on each dimension of the indicators**

### **Definition of forms of violence**

#### *The major options for indicators*

- A single indicator that includes all forms of gender-based violence against women and which does not separately specify them.
- A separate indicator for each form of violence.
- A few indicators, one each for the more major forms of violence against women.
- A single indicator confined to domestic violence.

#### *Recommended options*

74. For international comparisons:
- A main indicator that includes all of the types of violence and does not separately specify them (although they are separately named in the data collection instrument).
  - Additional separate indicators for the major types of violence that are found in all countries: domestic violence; rape; sexual harassment in the workplace.
75. For national purposes in addition:
- Additional separate indicators for those forms of violence that are common in that country, but which are not commonly found in all countries, such as female genital mutilation/cutting.

### **Units for the measurement of extent: prevalence and incidents**

#### *Major options*

- Prevalence: rate (%) of violence against women in the female population
- Incidents: number of incidents of violence against women per unit (e.g. 100, or 1,000) of female population

#### *Recommended options*

- life-time prevalence;
- annual rates of number of incidents of violence against women per 1,000 women.

### **Severity and impact**

#### *Major options*

- the nature of the action (Conflict Tactics Scale and its variants);
- frequency;
- injury: whether or not there is an injury, and if so its seriousness.
-



### **Proposed indicators integrating all dimensions**

76. Two indicators are proposed:

- 1). Life-time prevalence of any form of gender-based violence against women, differentiated by level of severity of injury (no injury, minor injury, major injury, death), expressed as a percentage of the total female population;
- 2). Annual number of incidents of any form of gender-based violence against women, differentiated by level of severity of injury (no injury, minor injury, major injury, death), expressed as a rate per 1,000 women, aged 16-65 years old.

77. Additional indicators:

- 3). In some instances, it will be both desirable and possible to make further differentiations within these indicators as to sub-types of violence against women, in particular, intimate partner violence; rape; and sexual harassment. This is not proposed as an alternative to the two main indicators, but as an addition.



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## **VI. APPENDIX: DATA COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OVERCOMING THESE**

### **Introduction**

1.

7. The advantage of a dedicated survey is that it can be tailor made for the methodological

and to have low levels of response to the survey. Samples based on women who have gone to refuges and shelters have consistently shown much higher rates of frequency of abuse than those from national surveys (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Straus and Gelles 1990).

13.



surprisingly high response rate of 70% (Heiskanen and Piipisa, 1998). This might be explained in terms of the unique features of Nordic society.

20. In some countries landline telephones have been used to make contact with respondents. Whether this provides a comprehensive sampling frame depends on two major factors that vary between countries. In some countries, such as Canada, coverage is nearly comprehensive, while in others such as the UK, telephone ownership rates in private households in Britain are particularly low among the poor heads of lone adult households (Beerton and Martin, 1999), and these are likely to include disproportionate numbers of women who have fled a violent home.

21. A further problem with telephone surveys today is the use of mobile phones for which random dialling techniques are not available, thus excluding those who have only mobile phones from the sampling frame. These are likely to be disproportionately young, probably leading to a skewing of the results, since younger people tend to have higher rates of violence.

22. The mode of enquiry is relevant because of its potential to not only reduce the response rate but to omit key sections of the population that have been found to be most at risk. The best approach will vary between countries at different levels of development of communication infrastructure. It may that sampling houses is the best way to obtain a comprehensive sampling frame, although this has implications for cost.

*Self-completion: Rapport or confidentiality?*

23. Is rapport or confidentiality more conducive to disclosure of events that may be sensitive? On the one hand there is the possibility that face-to-face interviewing can build up more rapport and support disclosure of sensitive events, while on the other hand, confidentiality engendered by strategies such as self-completion by computer or by postal questionnaire may increase the likelihood of respondents divulging sensitive information.

24. The British Crime Survey provided an opportunity to compare the outcome from face-to-face interviewing with that of the confidentiality of self-completion. In the first part of the interview, face-to-face interviewing is used; in the second, there is self-completion of specialised questions. The 74unfid-13credis the questios (from theloTD ( v4sncreen ande, fces ) Tj 0 -  
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26. The recommendation is to deliver the questionnaire in a manner that prioritises confidentiality in order to facilitate disclosure.

*Summary*

27. In the development of survey methodology the priorities are: a large sample size; the use of a comprehensive sampling frame and the use of modes of enquiry that generate a high response rate, and so as to include the more marginal groups of women who are most likely to have been at risk. In the delivery of the questionnaire, the methodological priority is to prioritise confidentiality in order to facilitate disclosure; this is confidentiality not only from other household members, but also from the interviewer. The need for annual surveys in order to generate data about experiences last year, not only across the life-time, brings a sharp focus to the issue of cost and the advantages of mainstreaming. Hybrid surveys, in which special modules are attached to mainline surveys, enable annual collection of data, while maintaining specialist framing and modes of questioning, especially that of self-completion.

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