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**Thematic discussion on aspects of violence against women
that pertain directly to the Commission on Crime
Prevention and Criminal Justice****Use and application of United Nations standards and
norms in crime prevention and criminal justice****Crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence
against women and girls****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/29 of 27 July 2006, on crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women and girls, this report provides an overview of the Secretariat's work in its implementation. The work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in this area has expanded over the past two years, but there is still potential to develop further the support provided to Member States, including by building gender aspects more clearly into the Office's justice reform programmes. The report also contains information on Member States' efforts in response to the problem of violence against women and girls, outlining the many initiatives and efforts they have undertaken to ensure that national strategies, action plans and related legislative frameworks are put in place. There is agreement, however, that the wide prevalence of violence against women and girls requires continuous efforts on the part of the international community to combat it.

* E/CN.15/2008/1.



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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2006/29 of 27 July 2006, the Economic and Social Council expressed concern at the high levels of violence against women and girls in many societies and drew attention to the need for ensuring effective and coordinated responses by the criminal justice system. More specifically, the Council:

(a) Urged Member States to consider using the Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice¹ in developing and undertaking strategies and practical measures to eliminate violence against women and in promoting women's equality within the criminal justice system;

(b) Encouraged Member States to promote an active and visible policy for integrating a gender perspective into the development and implementation of policies and programmes in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice in order to assist with the elimination of violence against women and girls;

(c) Requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, within available extrabudgetary resources, and invited the institutes comprising the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network to consider providing assistance, upon request, to Member States in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women and girls, in cooperation with other relevant entities of the United Nations system, and to integrate the elimination of violence against women and girls into their training and technical assistance efforts, including their crime prevention activities.

2. In the same resolution, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its seventeenth session, in 2008, on the implementation of the resolution. Pursuant to that request, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale dated 15 November 2007 to Governments inviting them to submit information to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on their efforts to implement the resolution.² A summary of the responses received, arranged in several thematic areas, is presented in section III below, while in section II an overview of the Secretariat's own work in the implementation of the resolution is provided.

II. Developing technical assistance programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

A. Mandates

3. The strategy for the period 2008-2011 for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/12, annex) states that any action under the strategy contributes towards the protection and empowerment of

¹ General Assembly resolution 52/86, annex.

² Replies were received from 26 Member States: Belarus, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Montenegro, New Zealand, Niger, Pakistan, Romania, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

those most vulnerable, in particular women and children, and to securing their lives, livelihood and dignity. It also emphasizes the need to take into account a gender perspective within prevention, treatment and reintegration and assistance to victims.

4. International legal and policy frameworks – including the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1993 (see resolution 48/104) and Assembly resolution 61/143 of 19 December 2006 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women – have been established to address and respond to the many different forms of violence against women, wherever they occur. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice first discussed the issue of violence against women at its second session. At the recommendation of the Commission, the Economic and Social Council adopted a resolution entitled “Violence against women in all its forms” (resolution 1993/26). Since that time, violence against women has been established as a distinct priority theme of the Commission and within training and technical assistance efforts of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme.

5. Within the United Nations system, the comparative advantage of UNODC in the area of violence against women relates to criminal justice responses to such violence. This was highlighted in the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century (General Assembly resolution 55/59, annex), in which the States Members of the United Nations committed themselves to taking into account and addressing within the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, as well as within national crime prevention and criminal justice strategies, any disparate impact of programmes and policies on women and men, as well as committing themselves to the development of action-oriented recommendations based on the special needs of women as criminal justice practitioners, victims, offenders and prisoners, and also to more effective ways of collaborating on the issue of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. The plans of action for implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century (General Assembly resolution 56/261, annex) called for measures to meet the special needs of women as criminal justice practitioners, victims, offenders and prisoners.

6. With regard to children, the Economic and Social Council adopted the Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime (resolution 2005/20, annex), which highlight the special vulnerability of girls when coming into contact with the criminal justice system and emphasize the issue of non-discrimination in that respect. The General Assembly, in its resolution 60/177, entitled “Follow-up to the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice”, adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which also emphasizes the importance of promoting the interests of victims of crime and taking into account their gender. UNODC has been actively involved in the preparation and launch of and follow-up to the United Nations study on violence against children and is a key member of the Inter-Agency Group on Violence against Children, with a particular focus on violence against children in institutions and the treatment of child victims and witnesses in the justice system. As such, the Office is currently implementing the recommendations of the General Assembly

(resolution 62/141, para. 50) and the Economic and Social Council to explore ways and means by which preventing and responding to violence against children can be incorporated in its technical cooperation activities in the area of children and the justice system, taking into account Assembly resolution 61/146 of 19 December 2006 and Council resolution 2007/23 of 26 July 2007.

B. Programme delivery and training

7. Against the above-mentioned background and pursuant to existing mandates, programme development in the area of criminal justice responses to gender-based violence continued throughout the reporting period to be based on assessment missions, past experience and available policy guides and tools, as well as requests from Member States for assistance. The specific expertise of UNODC is in strengthening criminal justice responses to violence against women, including a focus on how victims and witnesses are treated within the system. Traditionally, UNODC initiatives in this area have focused on addressing the needs of female victims of violence/survivors; however, 2006 and 2007 saw an increase of programme activities, including the development of practical tools and related training initiatives, to address a much broader spectrum of activities, encompassing the entire criminal justice system. These included:

(a) UNODC previously established three one-stop centres in Mpumalanga, the Eastern Cape and the Northern Cape, all in South Africa, which have been handed over to the local governments, ensuring long-term sustainability. Each centre has provided a range of services (legal services, counselling, medical attention, support and overnight shelter) to the survivors of violence, and rehabilitation services, including counselling and support groups for male perpetrators and potential perpetrators in order to break the cycle of violence. The feasibility of replicating the centres elsewhere in South Africa, and in Lesotho, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo is being explored. In addition, a large-scale programme to support the Victim Empowerment Programme of the Department of Social Development in South Africa is currently being designed;

(b) Under a global project entitled “Building non-governmental support structures for victims of violent crime, including victims of trafficking in persons”, grants were provided in 2006 to 19 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) carrying out victim support initiatives in several countries. The majority of the beneficiaries were women. A large number of community stakeholders, and law enforcement officers and other professional staff benefited from training, consultation and awareness-raising in this area. Under the project, 10 rescue/shelter homes were set up or supported, 933 victims of violent crime or trafficking directly assisted, 515 police officers trained and 19,233 stakeholders reached through advocacy. Three hotlines for people in distress were set up by NGOs, and communities were mobilized to monitor violence and trafficking. The project also supported a research study on the relationship between child trafficking and marriages, and on conviction rates for trafficking-related offences. A large number of knowledge products, such as a kit on safe migration and a training manual for police, were developed;

(c) In Afghanistan, UNODC successfully completed phase I of a project aimed at improving post-release opportunities for women and girl prisoners in Kabul, with a focus on educational and vocational training to better equip them for release back into the community. Training was also carried out for prison staff on special requirements in preparing women and girls for release and several tools were developed (see sect. II.C below). The project was also aimed at reducing violence within prisons. In phase II, similar activities will be extended to the provinces. It is intended to further substantially improve the situation of women and girl prisoners in the country and extend the project activities to selected provinces (e.g. Mazar, Herat, Kandahar) with a focus on the social reintegration of female offenders, comprising rehabilitation during imprisonment and post-release support. Under the project practical short-term interventions will be developed and implemented to address the social reintegration needs of women and girls in prison;

(d) The Southern African region has been chosen for pilot testing of training activities in the context of the forthcoming handbook for effective police responses to violence against women. The operationalization of the handbook will be supported through the production of related training material, the provision of training activities and awareness-raising initiatives. Training to respond effectively to survivors with special needs is an important reform process as it can change traditional values inherent in many police forces to a focus on service delivery, thereby encouraging long-term change within police agencies. Such police training programmes have been shown to be critical agents of change for broader criminal justice system reform;

(e) Ongoing and planned UNODC projects on juvenile justice in Afghanistan, Burundi, Egypt, Haiti, Jordan, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen pay particular attention to the situation of girls and to awareness-raising and training on the special needs of girls;

(f) An ongoing global project on implementation of the Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime is giving special consideration to the situation of girl victims and witnesses of crime. Under the project a model law, a handbook and an interactive training kit are being produced and regional training seminars will be organized in the period 2008-2010;

(g) A two-and-a-half-year project entitled "Building capacity of law enforcement and justice sectors to prevent and respond to domestic violence in Viet Nam" will start in July 2008. Under the project, training materials will be developed, training courses will be conducted, the development of sufficient regulatory documents to ensure effective implementation of the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention will be supported and legal support for victims will be strengthened through building up the capacity of the Legal Aid Agency. Support will also be provided for the development of specific criminal justice approaches based on a survey of criminal justice responses and the quality of services provided for the victims of domestic violence, and awareness of the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention will be raised at national level. The project activities are partly funded through the United Nations Joint Programme on Gender Equality;

(h) In Rajasthan, India, UNODC contributed to an initiative, together with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Poverty Action Lab, to train police officers to respond effectively to violence against women. The programme was

aimed at improving public perceptions and the trust of the community, as well as the overall quality, efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of over 2,000 police officers in police stations;

(i) As part of a programme to assist the process of prison reform in Southern Sudan, UNODC has developed, together with the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), a training programme to build leadership capacity within the prison service and address the circumstances of prisoners with special needs. As part of this initiative, training on the special needs of women prisoners will be held, using the forthcoming UNODC handbook on female offenders and the management of women in prison;

(j) UNODC has also developed a programme to implement Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 16/2, entitled “Effective crime prevention and criminal justice responses to combat sexual exploitation of children”, in which it was requested to explore ways and means, within its mandate and subject to extrabudgetary resources, taking into account, inter alia, work done on that issue by other agencies and bodies in the United Nations system, by which it could contribute to effective crime prevention and criminal justice responses to combating sexual exploitation of children. Under the programme, it is proposed to prepare model legislation and a training package, and to develop public service announcements, as well as to provide technical assistance to requesting States. This programme is still in need of funding;

(k) Men, women and children are trafficked for a great number of exploitative purposes. In responding to this, the Office’s Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings addresses trafficking in women and girls as a specific form of violence against women. In line with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, programme activities are aimed at providing balanced interventions that address both criminal justice concerns and ensure victims’ rights – in other words, that improve criminal justice action against offenders, but not at the expense of providing support and assistance to victims of trafficking. Eighteen ongoing country, regional and global projects are assisting Member States in implementing all aspects of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

C. Development of tools and other publications

8. The Office is continuing to develop and expand a series of tools to support countries in the operationalization of United Nations standards and norms relating to broad criminal justice reform issues, including specific handbooks and manuals addressing the issue of violence against women. The handbooks are designed to be used by all actors involved in the criminal justice system, including policymakers, legislators, prison managers, prison staff, members of NGOs and other individuals and organizations active in this field. The handbooks can be used in a variety of contexts, both as reference documents and as training tools. In its resolution 2007/29, the Economic and Social Council requested UNODC inter alia to integrate the elimination of violence against women and girls into its training and

technical assistance efforts. Therefore, the Office has developed a number of handbooks with a specific focus on women/girls.

Handbook for effective police responses towards violence against women

9. On the basis of the mandates stemming from General Assembly resolutions 52/86, entitled “Crime prevention and criminal justice measures to eliminate violence against women”, and 58/185, entitled “In-depth study on all forms of violence against women”, a handbook for effective police responses towards violence against women has been developed and is currently being finalized in line with the recommendations of an expert review meeting held in June 2007 in Vienna. Pilot activities to provide training for law enforcement officials and to adapt the handbook for the training of justice sector officials are part of a UNODC proposal to build the capacity of the law enforcement and justice sectors to prevent and respond to domestic violence in Viet Nam (see also sects. B above and D below). In the Southern Africa region, UNODC will soon start to pilot the handbook in the framework of a joint programme of activities being carried out with the Southern African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization.

Handbook on female offenders and the management of women in prison

10. In its resolution 61/143 of 19 December 2006, entitled “Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women”, the General Assembly most recently drew attention to particularly vulnerable groups of women, including “women in detention”, when urging Member States to take action to intensify efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women. In line with this resolution and those mentioned in paragraph 9 above, the forthcoming handbook on female offenders and the management of women in prison provides guidance to prison managers on implementing a gender-sensitive approach, taking into account the particular circumstances of female offenders and their special needs as women in prison. In view of the significant rise in the rates of women’s imprisonment in many countries worldwide, the handbook also provides an overview of measures that could be taken to reduce the female prison population.

Handbook for female prison staff on responding to the specific needs of women prisoners in Afghanistan

11. In the framework of the UNODC criminal justice reform programme in Afghanistan, several tools emphasizing the special needs of women in prison have been developed. A handbook and an accompanying training curriculum for female prison staff on responding to the specific needs of women prisoners were developed, specifically aimed at increasing the capacity of criminal justice officials to identify and respond to the needs of detained women in preparation for their release back into society, and to strengthen cooperation with NGOs active in the community. The first pilot training sessions for female penitentiary staff working in Pul-e-Charki prison and the Kabul Detention Centre were held in May and June 2007 in cooperation with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, the Afghan Women’s Education Center, the International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences and Medica Mondiale.

12. An awareness-raising pamphlet for women prisoners, using drawings and cartoons, is being published in cooperation with the United Nations Development

Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in Afghanistan. The pamphlet is intended to inform women in prison about their rights and takes into account newly approved regulations of penitentiary law.

13. The final version of the UNODC study *Afghanistan: Female Prisoners and their Social Reintegration* was published in March 2007 and its recommendations continue to form part of the gender-related work of UNODC in Afghanistan.

Planned tools and other publications

14. The *Criminal Justice Assessment Toolkit*, launched in December 2006, continued to be a flagship publication for the Office, with its printed version and CD-ROM in constant demand and an ever-increasing number of website visits (over 5,000 were recorded between January and October 2007 and the number is expected to rise as the UNODC new website has been launched). The *Assessment Toolkit* was designed for use by the United Nations, government officials, organizations and individuals engaged in criminal justice reform as a dynamic set of documents, to be adapted and enhanced on an ongoing basis. There is now a need to expand beyond the initial 16 tools grouped into the four sections of Policing; Access to justice; Custodial and non-custodial measures; and Cross-cutting issues, to include a module on Gender and the criminal justice system, which will be completed in 2008.

15. An updated version of the *Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons*,³ first published in October 2006, will be published in October 2008. It includes model best practices for many different forms of intervention available for use and adaptation by a variety of practitioners, including judges, victim service providers, the police and policymakers. In 2008 also, a pocket-sized indicators checklist will be published to assist the identification by law enforcement actors of potential victims of trafficking, to allow the immediate assistance of such individuals.

16. A brochure to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS prevention and care for women in prison is forthcoming. In the closed environment of prisons, women are especially vulnerable to sexual abuse, including rape, by both staff and other prisoners. In many countries, women prisoners are held in small facilities immediately adjacent to or located in male prisons. In some instances, women and young girls may not be separated from the male prison population at all. Female prisoners may be supervised exclusively or mainly by male staff. Women in prison are also susceptible to sexual exploitation and may trade or be forced to trade sex for food, goods or drugs with other prisoners or staff. These factors place women at high risk of both sexual violence and unprotected sex and thus at high risk of HIV infection. Among the many issues highlighted in the brochure is the need for prison authorities to take all measures necessary to protect women from sexual abuse.

³ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.V.11.

D. Coordination with the United Nations system

17. Given the work of UNODC in the area of criminal justice response to violence against women and girls, the Office has sought to build effective partnerships with other United Nations entities, regional organizations and NGOs active in the field, to complement broader initiatives that are under way.

18. UNODC is a member of the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and its related Task Force on Violence against Women. The objective of the Inter-agency Network is to strengthen and further explore innovative approaches to ensure that issues relating to women, peace and security are fully incorporated in the policy and operational working agenda of headquarters and field-based actors, including the senior-level management executive committees, special representatives of the Secretary-General, peacekeeping teams, United Nations entities and civil society. The overall goal of the Task Force on Violence against Women is enhanced support to national-level efforts by United Nations entities, within their mandates, to combat all forms of violence against women.

19. Throughout the reporting period, UNODC was in regular contact with the Division for the Advancement of Women and provided advice on an ad hoc basis. In addition to coordinating the Task Force on Violence against Women (see para. 18 above), the Division oversees follow-up to the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1). In the framework of the Task Force on Violence against Women, the Division is also the custodian of the inventory of United Nations system activities on violence against women, to which UNODC has contributed.

20. The Office continues to be invited by UNIFEM to participate in its Inter-agency Programme Appraisal Committee for the annual grant cycle of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The Trust Fund is managed by UNIFEM and provides grants annually worldwide in support of local, national and regional efforts to combat violence against women. The annual meeting provides an opportunity for the substantive exchange of information and for the discussion on joint strategies between United Nations agencies on further strengthening efforts to respond to violence against women.

21. In October 2007, the Office presented a paper at the Expert Group Meeting on Indicators to Measure Violence against Women, organized by the Economic Commission for Europe, the Division for the Advancement of Women, and the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Africa. In this context it should be noted that the process of developing indicators to measure violence against women is currently ongoing at the United Nations system-wide level.⁴ UNODC has

⁴ On 19 December 2006, the General Assembly adopted without a vote a resolution entitled "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women" (61/143), in which it requested the Statistical Commission to develop and propose, in consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women, and building on the work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, a set of possible indicators on violence

an interest in this process because standardized and comparable measurement of the number of women who experience violence allows monitoring of the impact of assistance to crime prevention and criminal justice responses and assessment of the extent of the problem. In addition, the development of indicators is key to the strategy of UNODC for policy and trend analysis: "Better data and improved national capacity to collect data are needed to support and enhance the international community's responses to crime".⁵

22. An indicator provides a common way of measuring and presenting information. In the context of violence against women, indicators may be used to assess the extent of violence against women at the national, subregional or regional level. Data for such indicators may typically be drawn from specialist surveys concerned with violence against women. However, it is also important that indicators relate well to crime trend assessment and monitoring, including the United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and standardized crime victim surveys. In particular, a final agreed set of indicators should provide information about the nature of the act of violence and the identity of the perpetrator. UNODC continues to support the refinement of a proposed draft list of indicators and the development of unified methods and standards for data collection in this area.

23. The Office has been active in joint United Nations programming efforts, under the umbrella of the "One United Nations" initiative in Viet Nam in the development of a proposal to build up the capacity of the law enforcement and justice sectors to prevent and respond to domestic violence. Partial funding has been secured from the United Nations Joint Programme on Gender Equality. In order to guide inter-agency programming initiatives, a practical manual on good practice in joint programming on violence against women will be developed by the Task Force in 2008, with UNODC input, for use by United Nations Country Teams. The Office is also involved in the joint United Nations support to the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) efforts to tackle impunity of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence in Eastern Congo.

III. Information received from Member States

24. Replies were received from 26 Member States: Belarus, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Montenegro, New Zealand, Niger, Pakistan, Romania, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

25. The replies covered, in varying degrees of detail, each of the areas set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/29, as presented below. Responses from Member States that arrived after the deadline for inclusion in the present report will be acknowledged in an oral presentation during the consideration of the relevant agenda items at the seventeenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

against women in order to assist States in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women.

⁵ Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/12, annex, para. 13.

A. National action plans

26. Recognizing the need for multifaceted approaches to eliminating violence against women, most Member States that responded to the note verbale reported having adopted, or being in the process of finalizing, national action plans. The development of such plans is, several Member States pointed out, in keeping with commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995,⁶ where Governments agreed to take action to eliminate all forms of violence against women by means of a more systematic, comprehensive, multisectoral and sustained approach. The elimination of violence against women should be supported and facilitated by strong institutional mechanisms and financing, through national action plans, including those supported by international cooperation and, where appropriate, national development plans.⁷ National action plans are seen as a good starting point for reassessing strengths and weaknesses, setting targets, identifying partners and planning for the future.

27. Several countries reported on the establishment of task forces or equivalent structures to provide strategic direction to initiatives aimed at preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls, as well as at improving the availability of effective support services and structures for victims. In El Salvador and Malta, commissions on domestic violence had been established for the same purpose.

28. At the policy level, Mauritius and Ukraine called for the linking of violence against women issues to broader policies on the family. In a number of other countries also, initiatives have been taken in that regard. Romania has established the National Agency for Family Protection, which is responsible for developing policies and strategies to prevent and fight against domestic violence. Jordan has established the Family Protection Department, which is responsible for organizing comprehensive services relating to violence against women and children. In Greece, the National Centre for Social Solidarity coordinates services for vulnerable groups like victims of trafficking and abused women and children.

B. Legislation and judicial procedures

29. A number of Member States⁸ have adopted specific acts and related legislation or are revising existing legislation in order to strengthen the legislative response to family violence and violence against women. In the framework of national action plans and/or development plans, some Member States are engaged in a review of their Constitutions, civil codes and procedures, and other laws in order to assess whether they are adequate or require updating.

⁶ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1.

⁷ General Assembly resolution 61/143, para. 8.

⁸ Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, New Zealand, Niger, Pakistan, Romania, Tunisia and Ukraine.

30. Several States made reference to measures, sanctions and actions aimed at specific forms of violence against women and girls, including trafficking of women and children. They include the establishment of specific new institutions to meet the challenges involved. For example, Mauritius has set up a family court for settling family-related disputes, with the objective of improving the lives of families and children who appear before the court. Estonia has nominated special prosecutors to deal with cases of family violence.

C. Police

31. Many countries acknowledged the pivotal role played by the police – as the initial point of contact between most victims and the justice system – in ensuring an effective and consistent response to violence against women. Several countries highlighted the importance of having police procedures, policies and guidelines in place (Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Jordan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Pakistan). In Mauritius, the Police Family Protection Unit was set up in order to take into account the particular needs of the most vulnerable groups of the population. In the Syrian Arab Republic a special police unit has been established to investigate cases concerning violence against women and cases involving minors. Belarus reported that special teams consisting of police personnel, representatives of the health-care, educational, labour and social protection sectors and of the media are patrolling during evening and night-time hours, in an attempt to respond to family emergency situations.

32. Training for the police on specific issues relating to violence against women and from a victim-centred approach was carried out in many countries (see also sect. E below). Jordan and Pakistan also highlighted the importance of the recruitment of policewomen in order to improve contact with female victims.

D. Victim support and assistance

33. Almost all States referred to the need for victims to be assisted and supported, including through crisis intervention, police protection and assistance in the removal of goods from residences, the provision of temporary shelter, counselling, legal aid, economic assistance and advocacy. Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius and New Zealand highlighted the need for improving the responsiveness of the justice system as a whole to victims. Most countries supported shelters or “one-stop crisis centres” directly or provided funding to NGOs to establish shelters, including for victims of trafficking.

34. Most countries highlighted the need for a coordinated social service approach to responding to women victims of violence. Referrals of such victims by shelters for psychological, legal, medical and economic support are systematically made in several countries (El Salvador, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Turkey, Ukraine). Latvia has set up specific institutions which provide social rehabilitation for child victims of violence. Several States have specific protocols of assistance for providing support, such as Mauritius, where a protocol of assistance to victims of sexual assault ensures prompt and timely assistance from police and hospitals, with follow-up referrals as required. In Turkey, a health protocol stipulates the role of health

professionals in responding to violence against women. In Japan, special “victim support officers”, placed in public prosecutors’ offices, provide victims with mental, legal, financial and other types of assistance. In Japan also, victims are also notified about the release of the sentenced perpetrator from a penal institution.

E. Training

35. Almost all respondents made reference to the importance of training criminal justice system practitioners (police, prosecutors, magistrates, judges) on responding to violence against women. The kinds of training vary from training on broad gender sensitivity and cross-cultural sensitivity to the specific training of (i) prosecutors, on the detection, registration and investigation of violence against women (Bulgaria, Estonia, New Zealand); (ii) law enforcement officers, on front-end service delivery (Estonia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mauritius, Pakistan, Turkey); and service providers, such as health and legal practitioners (Luxembourg, Mauritius). Pakistan reported that issues relating to violence against women were systematically included in the curricula of police training schools, police training colleges and the National Police Academy. Turkey provides sensitization training to soldiers doing compulsory military service.

F. Awareness-raising/information campaigns

36. The majority of respondents provided information on a range of awareness-raising initiatives and information campaigns, which they considered as being among the most effective ways of educating the public at large. Mauritius also made reference to an innovative programme of “zero tolerance clubs”, the merits of a website providing a broad range of information on existing legislation and access to services and data. Malaysia, in the framework of its “WAVE” programme, referred to the media as an important agent for providing information and encouraging changes in cultural and social attitudes. Montenegro, Niger, Romania and Ukraine also mentioned the importance of the media, as well as of taking part in internationally recognized campaigns such as “16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence”. Several States emphasized the importance of targeting boys and men, as partners, by enhancing their participation and involvement in awareness-raising campaigns. Greece and Pakistan also mentioned the importance of sensitizing police and law enforcement personnel as part of the awareness-raising.

G. Research and data collection

37. Several States highlighted the importance of research and data collection for elaborating appropriate criminal justice responses. Baseline data on the types and extent of violence against women, as well as the number of reported cases were needed in order to coordinate comprehensive programmes and assist policymakers to develop holistic and effective strategies. In El Salvador, annual statistics are available and used widely by national authorities in this regard. In Malta, the Subcommittee on Research and Data Collection identifies, inter alia, areas for future research and gaps in existing research. Luxembourg, Montenegro, Romania,

Pakistan and Tunisia also highlighted the importance of research and/or made reference to specific initiatives in this area.

H. Ensuring effective criminal justice responses to violence against women and girls

38. A number of States underlined the importance of a coordinated criminal justice response to dealing with the multifaceted issues arising from violence against women and girls. Jordan stressed the importance of inter-agency coordination. New Zealand indicated that it was strongly committed to working with Government and non-governmental sectors, independent Crown entities and the judiciary to provide leadership and end family violence. El Salvador, Malaysia and Mauritius underscored the importance of forging social coalitions by formulating multidisciplinary and comprehensive frameworks that build on partnerships between ministries, NGOs and community-based organizations in order to maximize resources and provide support. New Zealand also stressed that the entire process of reporting, investigation, legislation, evidential procedures, prosecution and conviction needed to be coordinated.

39. A number of other initiatives have been taken to ensure effective criminal justice system responses to violence against women. Pakistan highlighted the importance of the recruitment of women at all levels of the criminal justice system: women police, women prosecutors, magistrates and judges. Pakistan also made reference to forensic capacity-building efforts, which were considered to be a deterrent to perpetrators of violence, in particular against women in custody or care. New Zealand drew attention to its Task Force for Action on Sexual Violence where the treatment and management of offenders were considered priorities for reducing re-offending and increasing community safety, while Mauritius highlighted a project for educating families of HIV-positive prisoners about a range of issues, with the aim of reducing family and sexual violence.

I. Children: special considerations⁹

40. Countries reported on special measures concerning child victims of violence. Malaysia has established special child protection teams and set up child activity centres, whose objective is to mobilize community participation in the implementation of violence prevention programmes. It has also established inter-sectoral suspected child abuse and neglect teams at hospitals, for reporting child abuse cases. Several countries (Belarus, Czech Republic, Latvia, Mauritius, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine) referred to child protection centres as primary means of protecting child victims of violence. Mauritius has established the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children. Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mauritius also highlighted the need for reliable statistics and comprehensive research to help achieve child protection goals.

⁹ More information on State action relating to child victims and witnesses is included in the report of the Secretary-General on standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice (E/CN.15/2008/11).

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

41. It is evident from the number and content of the replies received from Member States that the issue of gender-based violence and the responses of criminal justice systems to it are of paramount importance. All the countries that responded to the request for information reported that concerted action and efforts were being undertaken to ensure that national strategies, action plans and related legislative frameworks included specific provision and/or guidelines for ensuring effective criminal justice responses to violence against women. Respondents recognized that to maximize the effects of promoting an active and visible policy for integrating a gender perspective into the development and implementation of criminal justice system policies and programmes, efforts needed to be made in the areas of: national action plans; legislation and judicial procedures; the police; victim support and assistance; training; awareness-raising/information campaigns; research and data collection; ensuring effective criminal justice responses to violence against women and girls; and special considerations on children.

42. During the reporting period, UNODC continued to expand its programme of technical assistance for strengthening criminal justice system responses to gender-based violence by inserting the issue in assessment mission mandates, providing opportunities for policy debate, developing practical tools and reference and training material, conducting training seminars and supporting national efforts to implement specific programmes of activity. The comparative advantage of UNODC is in focusing on criminal justice responses to violence against women. Efforts were made to build effective partnerships with other United Nations entities, regional organizations and NGOs active in the field and to underscore the importance of including the criminal justice system as part of a holistic response to eliminate gender-based violence. There is a need to continue to expand this work in the context of overall United Nations efforts in this regard.

43. Considering the responses received and the work currently being undertaken and planned by UNODC:

(a) The Commission may wish to encourage Member States to provide extra-budgetary resources for continuing the development and implementation of field-based projects and programmes in the area of violence against women and girls, within the area of comparative advantage of UNODC, including with a focus on victims and witnesses. In addition, the Commission may wish to emphasize the importance of UNODC incorporating the issue of gender more broadly into its programmes and projects in the justice sector;

(b) The Commission may wish to encourage UNODC to continue, within its mandates, to provide assistance to Member States upon request in the area of criminal justice system responses to violence against women and girls, but with a particular focus on (i) access to justice for women victims of violence to ensure that they are empowered to avail themselves of avenues of redress; (ii) access to health and other services for female victims of violence; (iii) strengthening data collection efforts concerning all forms of violence against women and girls to track trends in prevalence and incidence, and support criminal justice-related policy development; (iv) the situation of women in detention, as well as children residing in prison with their mothers;

(c) It is recommended that the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice urge Member States to support the use of United Nations indicators on violence against women and girls through population-based surveys and the collection of administrative information. The Commission may also wish to explore further ways to enhance national statistical and research capacity for the collection of data by means of both specialized surveys and routine data collection.
