

29th session of the Human Rights Council

Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women

Panel 1: Eliminating and preventing domestic violence against women and girls

19 June 2015, 9 a.m. - noon
Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Concept note (as of 11 June 2015)

I. Background

The Human Rights Council holds an annual full day of discussion on the human rights of women in accordance with its resolution 6/30, 23/25 and 26/15.

The year 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the landmark Beijing declaration and Platform for Action. The annual full-day discussion will be divided into the following two panels: (1) Eliminating and preventing domestic violence against women and girls and (2) Women in economic and political decision-making. Discussions will present an opportunity to reflect on progress made, remaining and emerging challenges since the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, as well as to identify necessary steps to accelerate progress in the two critical areas of concern discussed by the panels.

II. Focus and objectives

Despite advances in women's rights around the world, violence against women and girls remains one of the most pervasive human rights abuse, and its occurrence in the home or by an intimate partner is its most prevalent form. Domestic violence is a human rights violation experienced across the world, occurring across all social strata and cultural groups. Country data reveal that globally, on average, 30 per cent of women who have been in a relationship report that they have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence by their partner and as many as 38 per cent of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner. UNODC Global Studies on Homicide found that in 2012, almost half of all female victims of murder (47 per cent, or 43,600 women) were killed by their family members or intimate partners, compared to 6 per cent (20,000) of male homicide victims. Intimate partner violence is also the most common form of gender-based violence against girls. UNICEF research reveals that, globally, nearly one in three adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 (84 million) in formal unions have been the victims of emotional, physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by their husband or partner. The imperative for addressing this type of violence against women has been reflected in various global and regional conventions, declarations and resolutions that condemn this violence as a violation of human rights and appeal to governments around the world to enact policies and programs to eliminate it. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in its 2013 Agreed Conclusions strongly condemned all forms of violence against women and girls and noted that domestic violence remains the most prevalent form of violence that affects women of all social strata across the world.

It has been reaffirmed through intergovernmental processes and across the United Nations that violence against women is the outcome of gender discrimination and harmful gender stereotypes about the role of women and girls that shapes social, economic, cultural and political structures, including at the Beijing Platform of Action, the Vienna Declaration and Program for Action, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, outcome documents of the CSW, and General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions. General Recommendations 12 and 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) clearly recognize violence against women as the maximum expression of inequality between men and women.

International human rights mechanisms have also recognised its different forms and manifestations, in particular gender-related killings of women and girls. Human Rights Council resolutions 23/25 and 26/15 invited the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to include a discussion on ways and means to more effectively prevent, prosecute and punish gender-related killings of women and girls during the annual full-day discussion on women's human rights to be held during the twenty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council. The UN Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014 notes that when women are killed, it is often their partner who is responsible. In 2013 the World Health Organization (WHO) and others estimated that as many as 38 per cent of female homicides globally were committed by male partners while the corresponding figure for men was 6 per cent. In November 2014, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to addressing violence against women in the private sphere at the Secretary-General's open-ended intergovernmental expert group meeting on gender-related killings of women and girls held in Bangkok.

As evidence and data regarding the effects of violence against women in the domestic sphere steadily increases, there has been global recognition of the importance of improving responses to and prevention of all forms of violence against women.

In this context, the panel will be an opportunity to discuss the best practices for prevention, response and protection of victims, by States and other stakeholders, as well as discuss the constraints and challenges that have held back progress in eliminating violence against women in the home context. In particular the panel will examine the patriarchal order which shapes unequal gender relationships between men and women, norms and attitudes that condone violence against women, prevalent notions of masculinity as well as how women and girls who face multiple forms of discrimination are exposed to increased risk of violence.

The review of the Beijing Platform for Action and the post-2015 framework provides a unique opportunity to address violence against women as a key dimension for the achievement of development goals and for addressing the unequal power relationships between women and men.

The discussion will focus on some of the following issues:

- The manifestations and prevalence of domestic violence against women and girls;
- Underlying causes of violence against women, including domestic violence and gender-based killings;
- Pursuant to HRC resolution 23/25, the outcome of the meeting of the open-ended intergovernmental expert group on "ways and means to more effectively prevent, prosecute and punish gender-related killings of women and girls, and on the work carried out on good and promising practices, such as the non-binding model protocol and the best practices guide for the investigation of gender related killings in Latin America";
- The response of States and other stakeholders to prevent domestic violence and respond and protect those subjected to such violence;
- Measures to implement to accelerate efforts for the elimination of violence against women.

III. Composition of the panel

- Chair: **H.E. Mr. Joachim Ruecker**, President of the Human Rights Council
- Opening statement: **Ms. Flavia Pansieri**, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Moderator: **Ms. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda**, General Secretary, World YWCA, and African Union Goodwill Ambassador for the Campaign to End Child Marriage

- Panellists:
 - **H.E. Ms. Marie Yves Rose Morquette Myrtil**, Minister on the Status of Women and Women's Rights, Haiti
 - **H.E. Ms. Blanca Hernández Oliver**, Spain's Government Delegate for Gender-based Violence
 - **Mr. Nur Hasyim**, Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru Indonesia and Member of the Secretary-General's UNiTE Network of Men Leaders to End Violence against Women
 - **Ms. Begoña Lasagabaster**, Director a.i., Policy Division, UN Women
 - **Ms. Julia Estela Monárrez Fragoso**, Professor and Researcher, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte
 - **Mr. Sven Pfeiffer**, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

IV. Format of the discussion

The panel discussion will begin with the opening statement by a senior official from OHCHR, followed by the introduction of the issue and the panellists by the moderator.

The panellists will then be given five to seven minutes each to make their initial statements and answer questions raised by the moderator where appropriate. The ensuing interactive discussion will comprise two rounds of interventions (45 minutes per round) for comments and questions from the floor (two minutes per intervention), followed by 15 minutes for comments and replies by panellists. The interventions of Member States and other observers may comprise questions and sharing of concrete examples and experiences on the issues identified in Section II above.

At the end, panellists will be given three minutes each to make their concluding remarks, followed by the final remarks to be made by the moderator.

V. Outcome

OHCHR will draft a summary of the discussions.

VI. Background documents

- Human Rights Council resolution 6/30 on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system
- Human Rights Council resolution 23/25 on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: preventing and responding to rape and other forms of sexual violence
- Human Rights Council resolution 26/15 on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: violence against women as a barrier to women's political and economic empowerment
- Modelo de protocolo latinoamericano de investigación de las muertes violentas de mujeres por razones de género, Spanish and English (2014)
- Report of the Secretary General, Outcome of the meeting of the open-ended intergovernmental expert group on gender-related killing of women and girls, E/CN.15/2015/16 (May 2015)
- Commission on the Status of Women, Political Declaration of 9 March 2015 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women
- Thematic study on the Issue of Violence against Women and Girls and Disability: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights - A/HRC/20/5