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**UNITED NATIONS DIVISION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

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Expert Group Meeting on indicators to measure violence against women

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Co-organized by UNDAW, UNECE and UNSD

in collaboration with ECA/ECLAC/ESCAP/ESCWA

**SPECIFIC INDICATOR INITIATIVES AND ISSUES IN THE ESCAP REGION
RELATED TO THE MEASUREMENT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Invited Paper

Submitted by ESCAP¹

I. Introduction

This paper focuses on initiatives in the ESCAP region related to indicators for the measurement of violence against women. It refers to initiatives in ESCAP as a regional commission and initiatives by government and non-government organizations in member states in the ESCAP region. Country examples of specific data collection initiatives by government and non-government sources on violence against women are briefly described, where these initiatives show institutionalized processes of data collection and use of indicators that could be useful in mapping the possible sources for use of indicators on violence against women for global, regional and national data collection.

II. ESCAP initiatives on indicators to measure violence against women

ESCAP's development of statistics and indicators on women in the region and interest in developing indicators for monitoring the Beijing Platform for Action is contained in publications such as *Statistical Compendium on Women in Asia and the Pacific* (1994) and *Statistics on Women in Asia and the Pacific* (1999). The development of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the BPA was chosen as one of the key strategies after Beijing+5. The 12 critical areas of concern of the BPA and their strategic objectives were used to provide the central framework for an ESCAP study, *Gender Indicators for Monitoring the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the Asia-Pacific Region* (2003). The indicators were regarded as a minimum set to allow monitoring and evaluation of implementation at regional and national

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level, of the Beijing agreements and other regional and international standards to promote gender equality and improve women's status.

In the 2003 study above, the proposed indicators covered all the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, including violence against women.²

The proposed indicators on violence against women covered the fo

- when data is available, the timing(year) or method of data collecting may differ
- data categories defined in different ways in different countries

Ydiffering calculations may be used when compiling certain statistics, making cross-country comparisons difficult

- the diversity and size of the ESCAP region may prevent the formation of common approaches to promoting gender equality and empowering women.

The suggestion is made that future work could be done by incorporating differences in sub-regions.⁹ This seems a useful way of working with intra-regional differences while also making advances in the use of indicators on VAW and data collection allowing some comparability by country and advancing the global objective of better data collection on violence against women.

In April 2007, the Gender and Development Section of ESCAP held an expert group meeting on regional strategies for implementing the recommendations of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women.¹⁰ Among the recommendations were that states must improve data collection on all forms of violence against women, particularly to provide for systematic sex-disaggregated data collection, analysis and publication at all levels, in co-operation with NGO and academic communities. National women's machineries were confirmed as having a strong role to play in advocating for and developing the knowledge base on gender-based violence in their countries.

Comments from the Statistics Division in ESCAP on VAW indicators and data collection

On initiatives in the region on indicators for the measurement of violence against women, the Statistics Division of ESCAP considers the following as constraints:

- difficulties of applying definitions and standards in such a diverse region, with different cultures and traditions;
- the taboo nature of violence against women making data collection extremely sensitive;
- the use of special surveys to reach women may be more effective methods of data collection;
- the need for advocacy on the issue to precede the use of indicators and data collection;
- the need to build on efforts to standardize methods of data collection on the issue;
- training and education in countries would be needed before statistical offices can use the indicators, collect, analyse and standardize the information;
- the use of the indicators and data collection would require the joint work with women's organisations and non-government organisations within countries.

In concluding on the role of ESCAP in the use of violence against women indicators and its role in data collection in the region, informal discussions internally indicate there is possibility of working on the issue but much groundwork would need to precede it if anticipating working on the issue with countries in the ESCAP region. There is the possibility of both the Gender and Development Section and the Statistics Section of ESCAP working together to do a preliminary survey of indicators and data collection on violence against women in the region. It

⁹ Yanghee, 2007, p. 59.

¹⁰ Expert group meeting, "Regional strategies for implementing the recommendations from the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women," 26-27 April, 2007, ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand.

was also agreed that training with statisticians would be needed and advocacy statistical offices on the need for data collection and use of indicators would be necessary if collecting and standardizing data on violence against women were to proceed in statistical systems in countries in the region. The diversity in the region was considered a major obstacle.

III Brief survey of other initiatives to monitor and measure violence against women in the ESCAP region

Intergovernmental – sub-regional – Pacific

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), an intergovernmental organization in the Pacific sub-region, has an initiative launched by its Human Development Programme (HDP), which includes standardizing indicators on violence against women, CEDAW legislative compliance, youth, health and citizenship, and peace and security in its collection and use of statistical information. The Human Development Programme of SPC is tasked with monitoring progress in empowering women and young people. The Human Development Report will involve partnerships with the Statistics and Demography Programme of SPC and country level partnerships with National Statistics Offices and National Planning Offices. The HDP intends including a gender analysis of existing statistical information. While not specifically outlining its indicators on violence against women, the HDP initiative lists violence against women as one of the emerging areas it intends including in standard statistical outputs. The Programme has also initiated a project for a socio-cultural research into gender-based violence and child abuse in two countries, Solomon Islands and Kiribati.¹¹

NGO – CEDAW indicators - CENWOR – Sri Lanka

The non-government organization, Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR), developed indicators for CEDAW implementation for South Asia.¹² This sub-regional study included several indicators for monitoring legislative compliance, education, health and employment. It is an example of the development of indicators for sub-regional initiatives.

GO – National Statistics - Philippines - gender indicators and data collection

The Philippines Core Gender and Development Indicator System(CORE GAD) has been reported on in previous UN meetings on VAW indicators by representatives of the Philippines National Statistical Coordination Board.¹³ These initiatives for data collection, provide examples of what can be done at the country level, using existing institutional frameworks for statistical data collection to gain information for gender policy and planning. Although details on the actual progress in the initiative need to be updated, this example nevertheless indicates the scope for national statistical systems to develop and use core indicators for gender and

¹¹ *Indicators for Monitoring Human Development*, Regional meeting of heads of planning and heads of statistics (HOPS), Noumea, New Caledonia, September 2007, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2007. SPC/HOPS 2007/ Working Paper 6.1, 5th. September 2007.

¹² *CEDAW indicators for South Asia: an initiative*, UNIFEM South Asia Regional Office and CENWOR, 2004.

¹³ *Philippine Development Indicators*. Report prepared for the UN Follow-Up Workshop on Development Indicators for the ASEAN Countries, Makati City, Philippines, 30September –4 October 2002, prepared by Teresita Bascos-Deveza [electronic version] accessed 2 October 2007 at <http://nscb.gov.ph/events/ASEAN>.

statistical offices and national women's machineries, could support these efforts by non-government by women's rights and gender advocates to end violence against women. Governmental efforts have been slow to follow the many, varied initiatives by non-government women's organisations to respond to this critical issue of concern: violence against women in its many forms.

Other Agencies – country studies and data collection on violence against women

The World Health Organization (WHO) maintains a database on intimate partner violence and physical violence against women and issued a groundbreaking report, the *World Report on Violence and Health(2005)*. Its multi-country studies on violence and women's health covered the following countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Namibia, Peru, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

In a meeting of national machineries for women in the Pacific on government strategies to address violence against women, many country NWM representatives expressed interest in doing similar studies, which were based on partnership between the national machineries and other ministries, including health and education.¹⁶ In countries where few studies on violence against women exist, such initiatives by other agencies can often be the means of a groundbreaking single study that can form the basis of government and community recognition of violence against women –

There is a need to build on previous work in ESCAP on gender statistics and review what preparations would be needed to use indicators on violence for data collection in the region. ESCAP could play a supportive role in having indicators incorporated in statistical systems in the region, so that there is consistent, reliable data available on violence against women in its many forms.

Opportunities for responses within ESCAP include:

- linking previous gender statistics work with present work on MDG indicators
 - joint work by statistics and gender and development sections on advocacy and training on VAW indicators and data collection
 - needs assessment survey on statistical systems in the region and their potential role in data collection on violence against women
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