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**Enhancing the role of institutions in achieving gender equality
in the Arab region****The economic cost of violence against women****Summary**

The present document sets out the key findings of Phase I of a regional project that the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is leading in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The project aims to develop, pilot and implement an economic model to estimate the costs of intimate partner violence, the most common form of violence against women in the Arab region. After presenting notable global and regional trends on violence against women and relevant international instruments, the document highlights the high costs of intimate partner violence on individuals, the economy, State institutions and society. It then presents the challenges encountered when tackling violence against women in the Arab region, which include definitional issues; insufficient legal and constitutional frameworks; haphazard policy frameworks poorly aligned with legal and constitutional frameworks; inadequate reporting mechanisms; and insufficient institutional capacities both at the macro level and in terms of service provision on the ground.

Based upon this analysis, the document argues that Arab countries must conduct costings of intimate partner violence and other forms of violence against women, to fulfil their international commitments and duty of protection, on the one hand, and to gather evidence for developing effective responses to that problem, on the other. To this end, the document provides an overview of the various methodologies used to estimate the costs of violence against women, and offers a costing model appropriate for the Arab region. The document concludes with recommendations to actors, including member States, academia and research institutions, to conduct costings of intimate partner violence, and suggests potential areas for ESCWA technical assistance.



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Introduction

1. Women across the world experience violence, regardless of their colour, race, income, age, social status or education. Violence against women (VAW) takes multiple forms that vary in type, magnitude and prevalence. One of three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence at one point in her life.¹ Violence against married women is among the most prevalent forms, both globally and in the Arab region. A comprehensive review of published evidence by the World Health Organization estimates at 30 per cent the global prevalence of physical or sexual violence among ever-married women, with the highest prevalence in Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Palestine) and South East Asia at 37 per cent, compared with 25 per cent in the European and Western Pacific regions.² Although regional data is limited, available studies show that approximately 35 per cent of ever-married women in the Middle East and North Africa region have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime – slightly above the global average.³
2. Several international instruments support countries in combating the various forms of violence against women, including the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women that defines this phenomenon as any “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.⁴ It recognizes the phenomenon as a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which differentiates it from any other form of violence in society. Other treaties addressing violence against women include: the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Moreover, the Programme of Action agreed at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development includes explicit references to violence against women, and the Fourth World Conference on Women resulting in the Beijing Platform of Action includes three strategic objectives aimed at combating violence against women and the girl child.⁵
3. The recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include a specific goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, namely SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. This goal contains six targets, three of them focusing on addressing discrimination, violence against women and harmful practices, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that women are fully engaged in and equally benefit from the development process.
4. To support Arab countries in achieving SDG 5, and particularly targets 5.1 on ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere and 5.2 on eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, ESCWA and UN Women have developed a regional project to address intimate partner violence as one of the common forms of violence against women.

¹ World Health Organization, Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, 2013. <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241564625/en/>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 48/104. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>.

⁵ In the Beijing Platform for Action, the following three strategic objectives are dedicated to addressing violence against women: take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women; study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures; and eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

5. The two-phased regional project focuses on estimating the costs of intimate partner violence in the Arab Region as a policy reform tool. Phase I of the project consists of two studies. The first study, entitled “Violence against women in the Arab region: What is at stake?” is prepared in the series “Status of Arab women”. It aims to generate evidence-based knowledge and a detailed understanding and contextualization of the human rights and socioeconomic consequences of violence against women in the Arab region. It also highlights the importance of estimating the cost of violence as an advocacy tool to address violence against women. It examines the linkages between such violence and social, economic and health-related factors. The second study “Estimating costs of marital violence in the Arab Region: operational model” is informed by the findings of the first study, and aims to develop an economic model to estimate the costs of intimate partner violence in the Arab region.⁶ This economic model measures the costs of intimate partner violence by estimating household costs associated with violence, community level costs of service provision, and costs related to women’s loss of productivity in the labour market. Phase II of the project, currently ongoing, aims to build the capacity of Arab countries in estimating the costs of violence as a policy reform tool.

6. The present document reflects on the key findings of Phase I of the regional project. It discusses the implications of intimate partner violence on women, children, communities and society. It presents some of the challenges in addressing violence against women in the region, particularly those stemming from the lack of coherence between constitutional, legal and policy frameworks. The document argues that the inconsistency of such frameworks with international standards and ineffective coordination at the national level constrains efforts to reduce the prevalence of violence against women and decreases women’s overall status. The document discusses the importance of costing intimate partner violence and provides an overview of economic models used globally for that purpose. The document proposes an economic model to cost intimate partner violence, which can be tested and applied in the Arab region.

I. EFFECTS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE ON WOMEN, THE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

7. Intimate partner violence has devastating implications for women, children, families and society as a whole. It results in multiple adverse effects on women’s physical, mental and sexual health, making it a cause of physical trauma, stress, fear, disability and death. Intimate partner violence increases the risk of miscarriage among pregnant women.⁷ Children who witness violent incidents are more likely to lose their sense of safety, feel socially isolated and exhibit aggressive behaviour.⁸

8. Intimate partner violence carries high costs for individuals, State institutions and society as a whole. Incidents are costly for individuals, who are often responsible for out-of-pocket expenditures, with catastrophic effects on the finances of survivors and their families. A study conducted by the International Centre for Research on Women estimates that the average out-of-pocket expenditure for health services following intimate partner violence in Morocco amounts to \$211.⁹ In Egypt, a study conducted by the United Nations

⁶ The focus of the regional project is on violence inflicted on women by their intimate partner. As such, it does not consider other forms of violence in the domestic sphere, such as violence against female domestic workers or the girl child. While the term ‘intimate partner violence’ is used in the West to refer to married and non-married couples, it is used in this project to refer to the marital violence since physical, emotional and sexual violence by the husband within a marital relationship is the most common form of violence experienced by women in the Arab region where households are generally established after a wedding or engagement. Accordingly, for the purpose of the project, the term ‘intimate partner’ is adapted to the Arab culture and used to refer to married or engaged couples. Therefore, marital violence is used interchangeably with intimate partner violence.

⁷ World Health Organization, op. cit.

⁸ United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), *Behind Closed Doors: The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children*, 2006. <https://www.unicef.org/media/files/BehindClosedDoors.pdf>.

⁹ See <https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Intimate-Partner-Violence-High-Costs-to-Households-and-Communities-Brief.pdf>.

Population Fund (UNFPA) estimated that women and their households directly spent 831 million Egyptian pounds in 2015 owing to violence perpetrated by a husband or fiancé.¹⁰

9. The various forms of violence against women, including intimate partner violence, put a strain on a number of State institutions, ranging from the health sector and social services to the police and the judiciary. Violence against women entails huge expenses, including costs associated with prevention, protection, prosecution, compensation and reintegration of survivors and their children into communities. In the United Kingdom, for example, the burden resulting from intimate partner violence on health and social services was estimated at approximately 3.9 million British pounds in 2009.¹¹ As such, violence against women drains a large portion of government budgets, which could have been dedicated to other sectors for the benefit of all.

10. The physical and psychological effects of intimate partner violence have direct implications on women's participation in the labour market, and in political and civic activities. Few legal frameworks offer women compensation for work absences following violence against them. A growing body of research shows that women suffering from intimate partner violence tend to be less attentive, and require more time to perform tasks.¹² Numerous studies show that the productivity of survivors is durably affected, with negative consequences for the productivity of the economy as a whole.¹³

II. CHALLENGES IN TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE ARAB REGION

11. Over the last decade, Arab countries have made significant progress in tackling violence against women, including through efforts to improve the alignment of national legislation with international legal standards, and strategies to combat violence against women. However, many challenges remain to ensure proper linkages between legal and policy frameworks, to enforce their implementation, and to reduce the prevalence of the various forms of violence against women. Below is a summary of the major challenges to effectively and meaningfully combat the phenomenon.

A. DEFINITIONAL ISSUES

12. The way violence against women is defined has serious implications for national legislation, policies, budget allocations and ultimately the scope of responses to the phenomenon. Narrow definitions, for example those considering only physical abuse, adopted in national legislation tend to elicit lower rates of reporting and a limited understanding of the phenomenon by health, legal and social services. This negatively affects the ability of survivors to access appropriate assistance from those services.

13. The lack of clarity when talking about violence against women in legal and policy settings in part correlates with the various terms used when referring to the phenomenon, and the overlap between them. Those multiple terms vary in their level of gender sensitivity and their ability to encompass all individuals exposed to violence, regardless of their sex, race, ethnicity, disability or colour. Examples of terms in English include 'domestic violence', 'marital violence', 'family violence' and 'spousal violence', all of which tend to de-gender the issue.

14. Two common terms within the United Nations framework, 'violence against women' and 'gender-based violence', introduce a higher sensitivity to gender-specific dimensions of violence, although they also carry

¹⁰ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), The Economic Cost of Gender Based Violence Survey Egypt 2015. <http://egypt.unfpa.org/publications/economic-cost-gender-based-violence-survey-egypt-2015>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² See World Bank, Intimate partner violence: economic costs and implications for growth and development, 2013, research series No. 3. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/412091468337843649/pdf/825320WP0Intim00Box379862B00PUBLIC0.pdf>.

¹³ See World Bank, Estimating the Association between Women's Earnings and Partner Violence, 2013, research series No. 1. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16696>.

some definitional uncertainties. ‘Gender-based violence’ is usually used in a broad sense to include violence against boys and men, as well as women and girls owing to gender-specific vulnerabilities. ‘Violence against women’ is limited to incidents of violence inflicted against this group, and excludes men and boys. It implies that the violence perpetrated in these cases is due to the subordinate status of women and girls in society, reinforced by patriarchal customs and traditions that legitimize violence against them.¹⁴

15. In the Arab region, the terms most commonly used are ‘family violence’, “*al-’unf al usari*,” and ‘violence against women’, “*al-’unf-ded-al-mar’a*”. ‘Family violence’ encompasses abuses perpetrated by any member of the family against another member. ‘Violence against women’ captures forms of violence perpetrated against women in both the private and public spheres.

16. These definitions appear too broad for the purpose of the present project, however, particularly given the need to ensure that data collected and reported is accurate, consistent and comparable at the national and regional levels. As a result, the term utilized in this project is more narrowly defined as ‘intimate partner violence’, which is translated in Arabic to “*al-’unf-al-zawjy*,” and specifically encompasses violence between married or engaged couples, with a particular focus on violence perpetrated by husbands against wives.

B. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

17. Despite the enactment of legislation on violence against women in several Arab countries, these laws are generally not aligned with constitutional reforms and amendments. They also do not fully comply with the United Nations guidelines and model framework for legislation on violence against women. For instance, most national legislation reforms do not reflect State obligations on due diligence. Most legislation, including those newly developed, adopt a narrow definition that overlooks various forms of violence, such as marital rape and incest. In addition, laws often focus only on prosecuting perpetrators of violence, and neglect the important elements of preventing violence, protecting survivors, and reintegrating them into society. These laws are also generally silent about the provision of services to survivors of violence.

18. Arab countries’ relatively high commitment to international instruments governing women’s rights has yet to be fully translated into action to enable them to meet their international obligations, particularly those under CEDAW and the CEDAW Committee general recommendations. Although national constitutions are a critical lens to map and understand gender issues within society, those of most Arab countries are not adequately aligned with or reflective of international obligations.

19. The majority of Arab constitutions prohibit discrimination. Nonetheless, not all prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which undermines the stipulation and allows for a wide spectrum of interpretation. Many Arab constitutions do not comply with the definition of a gender sensitive constitution, which should include, among other things, the adoption of provisions on equality among the sexes as opposed to a general provision on equality; the protection of women as a social group; and discrimination by actors other than the State, including the private sphere.

20. National legal texts are often as problematic as constitutional frameworks. Only a handful of Arab countries have adopted laws aimed at combating violence against women, or at least some of its forms, such as domestic violence. Arab countries that do not have specific legislation on violence against women are initiating prosecutions on the basis of other criminal offences, such as physical or sexual assault.¹⁵ This approach presents a series of problems. For example, countries that do not have a specific law on violence against women often deal with the case of a husband abusing his wife from the same perspective as a stranger

¹⁴ See ESCWA and UN Women, *Combating domestic violence against women and girls: Policies to empower women in the Arab region*, 2013. <http://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2013/all/combating-domestic-violence-against-women-and-girls>.

¹⁵ See ESCWA, *Against Wind and Tides: A Review of the Status of Women and Gender Equality in the Arab Region* (Beijing +20), 2015. <https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/women-gender-equality-arab-region.pdf>.

abusing a woman, overlooking structural inequalities at the household level and their links to violence in the private sphere. Specific laws on violence against women draw the attention of public and justice practitioners to the gravity of such abuses, thus fulfilling an objective often mentioned in existing national strategies.

21. Constitutional and legal reforms on violence against women in Arab countries should be guided by international commitments, including those under CEDAW and the CEDAW Committee general recommendations. This places a requirement of due diligence on the State to prevent discrimination against women. As per this requirement, constitutional reforms must be adequately aligned with national legal frameworks that prevent discrimination. The due diligence requirement also entails the adoption and enforcement of comprehensive laws that prevent and protect women from violence.

C. POLICY FRAMEWORKS

22. A policy framework is central to addressing violence against women. The majority of Arab countries, including Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and Tunisia, have developed national strategies specifically focused on violence against women. Other countries, including Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco, have dedicated sections of their national strategies to gender equality, the empowerment of women and combating violence against women.

23. Although those policy frameworks reflect international best practices to varying degrees, their applicability is undermined in several countries by a lack of resources, capacity or political will. A common limitation in that regard is the lack of clear linkages and complementarity with constitutional and legal frameworks on violence against women. Limited, or inexistent, constitutional or legal frameworks restrict the applicability of policy frameworks, for instance where they fail to give a legal basis, a mandate or appropriate resources to prevent or prosecute violence against women and protect victims. In several Arab countries, this lack of linkages has contributed to piecemeal progress in the operationalization of policy frameworks. Moreover, policy frameworks, such as national strategies, rarely call for or include commitments to legal or constitutional reform.

24. There is, therefore, a need for greater complementarity and linkages between the constitutional and legal frameworks, on the one hand, and policy frameworks, on the other. To ensure the effective implementation of interventions on violence against women, member States must adopt a holistic approach to create linkages across those dimensions, and legal and constitutional reforms for the successful operationalization of frameworks. Policy frameworks should, in turn, include legal reform, focusing notably on the inclusion of international obligations, such as due diligence, at the legal and constitutional level. Policy frameworks should also contain measures to facilitate the implementation of a legal framework on violence against women, and ensure that reform trickles down to survivors of violence and society at large.

D. REPORTING MECHANISMS

25. Reporting systems are crucial in calculating the costs of violence against women for survivors and their families, the economy and society. Reporting systems should comprise the following elements:

(a) Data collection: comprehensive forms and templates should be developed to report violence committed against women;

(b) Data supply: all cases should be recorded and documented as confidential information. A data repository could be used to document cases using appropriate software;

(c) Information extraction: collected information should be accessed by other organizations active in combating violence against women through a unified system.

26. Reporting mechanisms are often inadequate in the Arab region. Surveys have shown that women often face obstacles when trying to report an incident of violence, and most fear retaliation from the perpetrators if

they report such incidents. According to a survey conducted by ESCWA, nine Arab countries stated that women did not report violence for emotional reasons; while six countries noted that women did not report cases of violence for economic reasons, because they felt that seeking legal or any other type of assistance would be costly.

27. The same survey showed that women in several countries did not seek help because the police did not take their issues seriously and would not properly assist them. Several countries also mentioned that culture and tradition played a large role in preventing women from reporting violence. Women often fear that their family and community will stigmatize them if they speak up against violence. This is especially true for sexual violence, whereby women fear that reporting it will result in reprisal, shame and stigma. Some women also claimed that they feared losing their children.

28. Structural issues also result in women underreporting violence. In some cases, women's inability to access information, coupled with illiteracy, plays a large role in preventing women from seeking assistance. The media in the region also tends to provide unsympathetic or limited coverage on the negative consequences of violence against women, and fails to provide adequate information to women seeking assistance. In addition, the lack of specialized units handling violence against women discourages women from reporting.

29. Creating an environment where women feel safe to report violence can encourage them to request necessary healthcare, social and legal counselling. It also facilitates data collection on abuses. More evidence on the forms and prevalence of violence against women in the Arab region is needed, as many types of violence are not documented for the reasons highlighted above. Reporting mechanisms are therefore essential for costing violence against women in the region; they must be improved and expanded as they are a key method for gathering essential knowledge for the development of policies and intervention programmes.

E. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

30. Institutions in most Arab countries lack the required capacity to effectively and durably tackle violence against women. Ministries of finance, planning, public health or social affairs, and statistical offices, rarely have adequate capacity, awareness, coordination or data in that regard, as a result of ineffective reporting mechanisms and the above-mentioned fragmented constitutional, legal and policy frameworks. Those institutional weaknesses adversely affect State accounts by hindering adequate costing and planning for gender-responsive budgeting and evidence-based interventions against violence against women, for example.

31. Institutional capacity is also generally insufficient in terms of individual healthcare, social and judicial services, where there is a dearth of dedicated resources, awareness and standard procedures regarding violence against women. This can result in insufficient or inadequate service to survivors, which in the long run can carry higher costs for individuals, households and society. For example, medical treatment for a survivor of intimate partner violence carries no guarantee that the incident will not recur, whereas referral to appropriate social or legal services by a medical professional can decrease or end further occurrences. Similarly, limited capacity or legal mandate by social services or law enforcement to investigate possible instances of intimate partner violence hinders the prevention and prosecution of such incidents.

32. Member States must therefore build the capacity of all institutions dealing with violence against women, both at the macro level and on the frontline, including in hospitals, police forces and social services. This requires the participation of all relevant institutions in costing exercises to build a body of evidence for institutions to develop policies and allocate financial resources. In addition, member States should provide financial and technical resources, training and awareness-raising activities on violence against women to relevant institutions. Member States should also take steps to enhance coordination between those institutions and State services within the framework of national strategies and response plans, for example.

III. COSTING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE GLOBALLY AND IN THE ARAB REGION

33. Globally, around 60 studies have been conducted to estimate the costs of intimate partner violence. The majority of these studies have been carried out in western developed countries, and a handful in low and middle income countries. The majority of costing studies have focused primarily on intimate partner violence during a specific period of time – usually within the last year to get an annual cost estimate.

34. Most costing studies use several distinct costing methodologies that assess direct and indirect tangible (monetary costs) or intangible (non-monetary) costs at different levels: individual, household, business, community, and Government. Duvvury, Grown and Redner (2004)¹⁶ suggest that estimating costs of intimate partner violence in low and middle income countries should focus on direct and indirect tangible costs for individuals, families, communities and the economy, owing to the nature of direct and indirect intangible costs that are more difficult to calculate as they rely in large part on longitudinal data that are not easily available within low and middle income countries.

35. The cornerstone of an intimate partner violence costing is the assessment of its impact on women and girls' capabilities. As such, most studies centre their cost estimation on individual and household costs, although broader costs are also considered. Total estimates generally consider direct tangible costs (e.g. healthcare), indirect tangible cost (e.g. absenteeism, unpaid care work, missed school), and direct intangible costs (e.g. productivity loss in terms of earning differential as a proxy). Data availability determines the selection of methodology to be used. Below is a snapshot of the six main methodologies used to measure the costs of violence against women.

A. DIRECT ACCOUNTING METHODOLOGY

36. The direct accounting methodology is useful in establishing the direct and intangible costs of intimate partner violence. The methodology establishes a unit cost for service or variable consideration (based, for example, on an annual budget) and multiplies with the total affected population. The method is used for estimating costs of service provision, out of pocket expenditures and foregone income due to marital violence, for instance. It is typically used across service provision sectors to estimate the cost of preventing and responding to violence.

B. ECONOMETRIC METHODOLOGY

37. The econometric methodology is used to estimate the impact of life events, such as marital violence, on productivity or labour force participation. Various regression techniques are used to establish both tangible and intangible costs, such as productivity loss and reduced labour force participation. Specific costings can also measure lost productivity owing to disability or premature mortality. This methodology requires data on working life trajectories, and micro data sets with labour force information on women's participation, working hours and earnings.

C. PROPENSITY SCORE MATCHING

38. This methodology is similar to the econometric methodology, but adopts a non-parametric approach (i.e., it does not assume that variables have normal distribution). It uses an equation of risk factors for violence, computes the probability of experiencing violence by comparing data on survivors of violence and women who have not experienced violence, and correlates it with outcome measures such as wages. This model has

¹⁶ Nata Duvvury, Caren Grown and Jennifer Redner, *Cost of Intimate Partner Violence at the Household and Community Levels, An Operational Framework for Developing Countries*. (International Center for Research on Women, 2004).

been used to estimate the impact of intimate partner violence on employment, earnings, childcare and health costs.

D. WILLINGNESS-TO-PAY OR ACCEPT/CONTINGENT VALUE METHODOLOGY

39. This methodology is used to estimate the direct intangible costs of long-term pain and suffering. It is based on assumptions about value of life and what one is willing to pay to avoid violence, or willing to accept to compensate for long-term consequences of trauma (physical and mental due to marital violence). The ‘willingness-to-pay’ estimates are based on values that workers place on small risks of injury or death, whereas the ‘willingness-to-accept’ estimates are based on actual recompense for injured individuals.

E. DISABILITY ADJUSTED LIFE YEARS

40. This method measures the years of life ‘lost’ owing to death, disability or chronic morbidity. It is calculated as the present value of the future years of disability-free life that are lost as a result of illness, injury or premature death. Disability adjusted life years are the sum of the years of life lost owing to premature mortality in the population and the years lost due to disability. It is particularly useful to establish the health burden of intimate partner violence relative to other health conditions, such as heart conditions and cancer.

F. GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

41. Gender responsive budgeting is used by Governments throughout the Arab region to ensure accountability in meeting their commitments on gender equality. This methodology is currently used in Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Morocco. It involves assessing budgetary allocations to sectoral stakeholders in service delivery. When used to cost violence against women, the methodology involves the following five steps: mapping services that need to be provided as part of legislation and policies in each country; identifying existing services currently provided; identifying services used by women survivors of violence by mapping services often sought by survivors; identifying government allocations for programmes addressing violence against women, whether from national or local administrative authorities; and assessing the flow of money to local services used by survivors of violence against women.

42. An economic costing model for the Arab region is being developed as part of the project, designed on the basis of what is feasible in the region given the legal and policy frameworks on violence against women, the administrative information systems in relevant sectors, and the availability of required socioeconomic information in existing datasets. The methodology for costing suits the fragmentary nature of existing data on intimate partner violence and its economic impact in the region, and can develop an initial approximation of government expenditure on service provision.

43. In addition, this model comprehensively captures the direct and indirect costs associated with marital violence. It also accounts for business costs, including productivity loss owing to violence across all economic sectors, not only the household sector. The value added of differentiating between household costs and business costs is the development of targeted advocacy messages to households, the business community, government and non-government service providers, and decision-makers.

44. Data required for the proposed economic model includes justice costs (policing, court proceedings, penal cost, etc.), health costs (infrastructure, material cost, personnel, etc.), social service costs (hotlines, shelters, information centres, etc.), education costs (special education services, etc.), foregone income (lost work time, actual leave time, unpaid care work, etc.), and household costs (out-of-pocket expenditures for services, including medicine, transport, therapy, etc.).

45. The various costs described above can be summarized in a total cost model on the direct and indirect tangible costs (hereafter referred to as financial costs) of marital violence as follows:

$$FCMV = THC + TCSP + TBC$$

46. FCMV are the financial costs of marital violence, which is the sum of the total household cost (THC), total cost of service provision (at the community-level, TCSP), and total cost to businesses (TBC).

47. The proposed economic model will be tested in Palestine to evaluate its appropriateness in a national context. This model is consistent with international recommendations when considering existing limitations, particularly limited data availability. It does involve a risk of double counting, however, as the delineations between household, service provision and business costs can be porous, in particular when data collection mechanisms lack strength. Data availability will largely determine the accuracy of cost estimations at the household, community and business levels. The model does, however, provide a good initial cost estimate, which can be built upon as national reporting mechanisms improve, administrative data systems are strengthened, and other gaps are addressed. The effectiveness of the model will ultimately depend on the type of available data, and on coordinated data collection efforts.

IV. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

48. The present document illustrates the numerous issues that must be addressed to holistically tackle violence against women in the Arab region. Firstly, the document highlights the need to broaden the definition of violence against women to effectively capture and measure its various forms. These include forms that are traditionally not considered in the Arab region, such as those occurring in the domestic sphere. The document also underlines the need for better alignment and enhancement of constitutional, legal and policy frameworks targeting discrimination and violence against women, in line with international obligations. It provides compelling evidence for countries to implement effective reporting mechanisms, essential for developing policies and intervention programmes, on the one hand, and for creating an enabling environment where women survivors of violence feel safe to come forward, on the other. The document stresses the necessity of strengthening institutional capacity to address violence against women, both at the macro level and in terms of frontline services.

49. The document provides evidence supporting the development of an economic model to cost intimate partner violence as an effective tool for State institutions and non-governmental organizations, to assess its impact on economies and societies in the Arab region. The document offers an overview of the various methodologies available for this purpose, before proposing one appropriate for the Arab region.

50. The following policy recommendations focus on three key stakeholders, namely the State, which takes the lead in addressing the problem; United Nations agencies and other international organizations; and civil society actors and research institutions.

A. STATE INSTITUTIONS: ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEADERSHIP

- Align VAW accountability tools, including constitutions and national legislations, with international instruments and due diligence standards and obligations on the human rights of women and girls to ensure that the existing culture of impunity is fully addressed in legal frameworks;
- Enact national legislation on violence against women that incorporates marital violence. Such legislation should provide a comprehensive definition encompassing all forms of violence, such as marital rape, outline the range of applicable criminal sanctions and penalties, and identify services provided by the State as part of its obligations as a duty bearer;
- Enhance policy frameworks to fully take into account member States' international obligations, notably due diligence under CEDAW, and emerging international standards and best practices;

- Translate policy frameworks into concrete policy mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of legal frameworks and enhance the capability of all State institutions involved in addressing violence against women;
- Build data collection systems on different types of violence against women. This could include establishing a national victim survey to gather information on intimate partner violence experienced by women and men. This survey will provide data to monitor key indicators on violence against women and identify crucial trends over time;
- Conduct nationwide and regional evidence-based research on the economic costs of violence against women to encourage meaningful legislative reforms to protect women in the economy, and recognize the large economic benefit of protecting women as a source of productive labour throughout the Arab region;
- Strengthen the capacity of government employees involved in reporting violence against women, to ensure systematic and regular record-keeping at all levels;
- Strengthen institutional financial and technical capacity and improve awareness on violence against women in all institutions dealing with the phenomenon at the macro level and on the frontline. In addition, improve coordination between all relevant institutions by developing and implementing national committees or action plans, for example.

B. UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:
SUPPORTING PARTNERS

- Promote and advocate legal reform to address limitations in national legislation by mobilizing political leadership and public opinion in the Arab region to combat violence against women in general, with a specific focus on intimate partner violence;
- Develop government capacity and facilitate information exchange on the institutionalization of gender-sensitive budgeting in national planning and budgeting mechanisms, to ensure that women's concerns are prioritized in annual plans;
- Support the design and implementation of studies costing the impact of intimate partner violence on the economy and society. This should be complemented by regional and national consultations on the importance of costing all forms of violence against women;
- Provide substantive support for the effective implementation of comprehensive national responses to violence against women. These responses should be aligned with due diligence standards and national strategies and action plans for combating domestic violence, and include required human and financial resources.

C. CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACADEMIA: NEW ISSUES

1. *Non-governmental organizations*

- Raise awareness among relevant stakeholders (national and local authorities, police, social workers, health-care providers, etc.) on the importance of costing the various forms of violence against women by holding awareness-raising sessions, organizing study tours, and conducting media campaigns;
- Coordinate with government agencies to establish reporting systems at the grassroots level, covering local clinics and health facilities, among other stakeholders;

- Contribute to costing intimate partner violence by providing an estimate of its associated costs borne by shelters managed by non-governmental organizations;
- Provide shadow reports on progress in addressing various forms of violence against women, including intimate partner violence. Such reports should include regular analysis of national legislative and policy responses to violence against women.

2. Academia and research institutions

- Undertake focused research on the intergenerational impacts of intimate partner violence in the Arab region, exploring in particular the short and long term impact of this type of violence on the present and future capability of young people;
- Assess the impact of intimate partner violence on economic cycles to understand the effects of broad business cycles and seasonal fluctuations in household income;
- In partnership with government institutions and non-governmental organizations, evaluate the cost effectiveness of interventions on violence against women, to identify a set of priority interventions as part of a comprehensive and coordinated national response strategy;
- Ensure wide dissemination of research findings on violence against women through various channels, including policy briefs targeting policymakers, and roundtable discussions and short seminars targeting civil society organizations and other stakeholders.

V. POSSIBLE PROJECTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

51. Based on the compelling evidence that intimate partner violence has major consequences on Arab economies, ESCWA proposes the following areas for intervention through its multidisciplinary technical assistance programme:

- Provide technical support to strengthen data collection on intimate partner violence at the national level to inform policy reform. Such intervention will target representatives of national women's machineries and statistical offices to enhance their capacity on the role of statistics in addressing intimate partner violence;
- Offer support to an Arab country (Palestine) in piloting the economic model by populating it with national data to estimate the cost of intimate partner violence. The country's experience will be conveyed to other member States for possible replication;
- Hold regional consultations to sensitize policymakers and civil society organizations on the importance of estimating the cost of intimate partner violence, to shed light on how costing can influence policymakers and instigate reform. This will be informed by the experiences of developed and developing countries.
