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PEACE: ACCESS TO INFORMATION, EDUCATION FOR PEACE, AND EFFORTS
TO ERADICATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WITHIN THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY

Efforts to eradicate violence against women
within the family and society

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1987/24 and decision 1987/121, selected the issue of violence against women within the family and society as one of the priority themes in the area of peace.

The report provides a brief review of international concern on the issue and the nature of violence against women within the family and society. It also contains a survey of current efforts to eradicate violence against women at the national, regional and international levels. Conclusions and recommendations are also presented for the consideration of the Commission.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on the Status of Women, at its 1987 session, selected the issue of violence against women within the family and society as a component of its first priority theme in the area of peace. This was subsequently endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1987/24 and its decision 1987/121 of 26 May 1987.

2. The present report is based primarily on the report of and case studies submitted to the Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family with Special Emphasis on its Effects on Women, held at Vienna from 8 to 12 December 1986 in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/14 of 24 May 1984, as well as work of the Branch for the Advancement of Women, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Office at Vienna, on the preparation of a publication on violence against women in the family.

I. EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

3. The World Conference of the International Women's Year, held at Mexico City in 1975, adopted The World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, in which attention was drawn to the need for the family to ensure the dignity, equality and security of each of its members and to be provided with assistance in the solution of conflicts arising among its members. 1/
4. In the Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace at Copenhagen in 1980, it was stated that to improve the physical and mental health of all members of society, policies and programmes should be established aimed at the elimination of all forms of violence against women and children and the protection of women of all ages from the physical and mental abuse resulting from domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual exploitation and any other form of abuse. 2/ In its resolution 5, entitled "Battered women and violence in the family", the Conference expressed its awareness that battering of family members must be recognized as a problem of serious social consequences that perpetuated itself from one generation to the next. 3/
5. After the Copenhagen World Conference, various intergovernmental bodies considered the issue of violence against women. The Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, in 1980, requested in its resolution 9 that at future Congresses and their preparatory meetings, as well as in the work of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, time should be allotted to the study of women as offenders and victims. 4/ In 1982, on the recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women at its twenty-ninth session, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1982/22 on abuses against women and children, in which it noted the concern expressed by the international community at the blatant and inhuman abuses of women and children, such as battery, violence in the family, rape, and the resultant exploitation and violation of human dignity and expressed the conviction that the abuse of women and children constituted an intolerable offence to the dignity of the human being. It called for immediate and energetic steps to combat those social evils. Also in 1982, the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, at its seventh session, identified violence as one of the pressing issues in crime prevention and noted that consideration should be given to the victims of traditional crime, especially those involving violence in society at large and particularly within the family. It noted that certain types of victimization, for example violence against female kin, were difficult to prevent or control, owing to prevailing cultural values, legal prescription and criminal justice responses. 5/
6. In November 1983, an international seminar on violence in the family, with emphasis on violence against women and children, was organized at Vienna by the Alliance of Non-Governmental Organizations on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in co-operation with the United Nations. The Seminar called for co-ordinated action by the relevant United Nations intergovernmental bodies and drew attention to the need for intensified research on the socio-economic background of violence in the family, in particular on the interdependence between violence in society and in the family. Also in 1983, the United Nations carried out a global survey on the situation of women and the administration of criminal justice systems, 1970-1982, which revealed the serious incidence of domestic violence against women and the inadequate justice response thereto in many countries, the most prevalent forms of which were sex-related violence, abuse and exploitation. In response to the survey, some countries reported a rather serious increase in some categories of female

victimization, especially rape, and this phenomenon of violence within the family was reported as a particular problem of serious concern in a number of countries (E/AC.57/1984/15, chap. II, sect. D, para. 36).

7. In 1984, the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women, adopted a resolution on violence in the family (1984/14), and the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, at its eighth session, discussed female victimization.

8. In the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, ^{6/} adopted by the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, emphasis was placed on the relationship between violence against women and the promotion and maintenance of peace. In the chapter on peace, it was pointed out that violence against women existed in various forms in everyday life in all societies and was a major obstacle to the achievement of peace and the other objectives of the Decade and that women victims of violence should be given particular attention and comprehensive assistance. It was also recommended that: national machinery should be established to deal with the question of violence against women within the family and society; preventive policies should be elaborated; and legal measure should be adopted to prevent violence and to assist women victims. ^{7/} The topic "abused women" was also dealt with under the chapter on areas of special concern, and it was recommended that Governments should: intensify efforts to establish or strengthen forms of assistance to victims of violence through the provision of shelter, support, legal and other services; affirm the dignity of women; undertake to increase public awareness of violence against women as a societal problem and establish policies and legislative measures to ascertain its causes and prevent and eliminate such violence, in particular by suppressing degrading images; and encourage the development of educational and re-educational measures for offenders. ^{8/}

9. Shortly after the Nairobi Conference, the Seventh Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, held in August-September 1985, recognized: that women were particularly vulnerable to exploitation, to the deprivation of rights and to serious interpersonal violence, particularly sexual assault and domestic violence; that women tended to be victimized by inequitable treatment and by camouflaged abuses, such as those which frequently occurred in situations of domestic violence; that reducing domestic violence greatly reduced violence against women in general; that the gender-based victimization of women constituted a problem "without frontiers", as it existed everywhere to various extents; and that manifest and latent violence and discrimination seriously jeopardized the personal and social development of women and was against the best interests of society. ^{9/}

10. In its resolution 40/36 of 29 November 1985, the General Assembly, inter alia, invited Member States to take specific action urgently in order to prevent domestic violence and to render appropriate assistance to victims and to adopt specific measures with a view to making the criminal justice system more sensitive in its response to domestic violence. It also requested the Secretary-General to intensify research from a criminological perspective and to report to the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders and urged the relevant United Nations bodies, agencies and institutes to ensure a concerted and sustained effort to combat the problem.

11. In addition to expressions of concern at the international level, a number of efforts reflected concern on the subject at regional level. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has dealt with

the situation of young women in the service and entertainment industry since 1979, when eight country studies were commissioned on the topic (E/ESCAP/SD.3/17). The Council of Europe, in 1980, included the question of violence within the family in its action programme for the promotion of equality between the sexes, and the legal aspects of the problem were examined by the European Committee on Crime Problems and incorporated in Recommendation No. R (85) 4 of the Committee of Ministers in 1986. The Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs, who met in 1985 before the Nairobi World Conference, called for immediate pan-Commonwealth action to confront violence against women, in particular to promote Commonwealth action against domestic violence, sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

12. The United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1976-1985), encouraged scholars around the world to accelerate their studies on the relationship between violence against women and the role and status of women within the family and society. The Decade also served to develop public awareness and understanding of this relationship. The provisions contained in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979) and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies 6/ both provide encouragement to Governments and societies in their efforts to eradicate violence against women. The issue is ripe for further exploration and the development of specific guidance by the Commission.

II. NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

A. Definition

13. While awareness of violence against women has increased and the issue has been the subject of international debate, there is no internationally accepted definition of the problem. Indeed, the multidimensional nature of violence against women has been made clear by research and case studies carried out around the world. The Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family with Special Emphasis on its Effects on Women, held in December 1986, and literature on the subject reveal that wider definitions of what constitutes violence against women can cover areas such as violence within the family, sexual assault and sexual harassment, pornography and the so-called institutionalized violence, such as involuntary prostitution, sex tourism and trafficking in women.

14. In order to draw and build upon ongoing work and to facilitate the identification of concrete action that should be undertaken on a priority basis to eradicate the problem, violence against women in this report is defined as physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse within the family; rape and sexual assault; sexual harassment and trafficking in women; involuntary prostitution; and pornography. These have as their common denominator the use of coercion to make women do things against their will.

15. For example, the Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family with Special Emphasis on its Effect on Women concluded that violence was best defined as encompassing, but not limited to, physical and sexual violence; mental, emotional and financial violence; as well as violence related to such structures as dowry. A working group of the meeting defined violence in the family as follows: "violence in the family manifests itself in physical mistreatment, often repetitive, which is interrelated with the exercise of mental torture, neglect of basic needs, and sexual molestation; violence is generally exercised in the closest family unit where there are dependency relationships, and results in grave injury to the victim; repetitive violence may be distinguished from the occasional occurrence of violence; research points to the fact that where immediate crisis intervention is not employed after occasional incidences, such acts tend to become repetitive and more severe" 10/.

16. Violations against the integrity of women's bodies, such as the various forms of harmful practices affecting the health of women and children, are also forms of violence against women. This question will not be treated in depth in this report, not only because of the complexity and specific character of the problem but also, and especially, because of the numerous activities in progress that deal with this question.

17. While similar problems exist in defining sexual assaults against women, they appear to be best defined as sexual contacts that are against the will of a particular woman or acts perpetrated against women who are unable, because of disability or youth, to understand the nature of the activity to which they may be subjected. Sexual assault can include abduction, defilement, indecent assault, procuration, unlawful carnal knowledge and rape. 11/

18. Sexual harassment is also difficult to define. Many men, as well as some women, are unable to construe certain apparently less harmful behaviour as conduct that amounts to harassment. It may therefore be useful in this context to define sexual harassment in terms of what a woman in a particular situation will perceive as threatening by virtue of her inferior or subordinate economic, emotional or physical position.

19. Prostitution and pornography can be included as possible forms of violence. Involuntary prostitution has always been considered a form of violence, and the practice of prostitution frequently involves violence. Pornography has a dimension of violence when it carries and reinforces a perception that women enjoy and need violent treatment. Moreover, pornography frequently involves involuntary or coerced participation by women.

20. Irrespective of the form of violence that is directed against women, the underlying reasons that cause it and the way in which the action is defined, violence against women within any context - the family or society - is an intolerable offence to the dignity and security of women and a gross violation of their human rights and fundamental freedom. In short, violence against women is a major social problem and a major obstacle to the achievement of peace, as stated in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies.

B. Incidence

21. The extent of violence against women has been largely hidden and widely denied, particularly violence against women in the family, because of community fears that an admission of its dimensions will be an assault on the integrity of the family. While available statistics reflect the pervasiveness, the frequency and the intensity of violence perpetrated against women in certain countries only, it is widely believed that such incidences occur in practically all countries. The Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family stated that "violence against women in the family is acknowledged to be a serious issue both in terms of magnitude and effect", and that "it crosses all barriers of class, income, race, culture and religion". 12/

22. Rape, sexual assaults and sexual harassment are also believed to be a wide-spread phenomenon. Available statistics in certain countries reflect the extent and indeed rapid increase of such incidences. The absence of statistics in most countries may not necessarily indicate the absence of such conduct but may confirm the fact that women victims are often very reluctant to report that they have been raped, assaulted or harassed because of guilt, shame or fear of being accused of provoking the perpetrator.

23. The exact number of victims or the approximate extent of violence against women both within the family and in society will probably never be known by any community or country. Information available so far is based only on reported and recorded incidences, such as crime statistics, statistics from family courts, police and hospital records, as well as records from shelters or refuge centres. Only a few statistical estimates of the incidence are based on research specifically designed to discover the number of victims of a particular form of violence against women and/or in a specific community.

24. While most available statistics and studies reflect the situation in western industrialized countries, case studies and research carried out in developing countries have confirmed that violence against women, in varying degrees, constitutes part of the dynamics of life of many families and societies around the world. It has often been considered as usual or common behaviour, and only recently has it emerged as a serious issue for world-wide debate. While statistics and findings are difficult to interpret and may reflect improved reporting systems rather than increased incidence, a hypothesis often advanced is that in the late twentieth century, violence as an ordinary form of behaviour may be becoming more public, common and frequent. It seems to be reinforced and glorified by the mass media and fueled by changes in society deriving from such phenomena as rapid urbanization.

C. Effects

25. Violence against women in all of its manifestations has both short-term and long-term effects for the individual woman, her children, other members of the family, the family itself and society in general. It is a form of conduct that frequently results in severe physical injury, at times culminating in death, and can lead to multiple physical and psychological consequences for the victimized woman. Clearly different levels of violence exist, and the severity of the effects of violence are also different. Beyond the short-term physical and mental effects that such conduct has on the individual woman, such conduct has serious consequences for her self-image, self-esteem and dignity. Furthermore, this also has a profound impact on the abuser and others, particularly children, in the case of domestic violence.

26. The long-term effects of violence against women are often less visible. Frequent assertions are made that violence in the family begets violence, so that children whose mothers were abused by their fathers will go on to repeat that pattern when they establish families. Thus, young men may learn to batter their wives from the behaviour of their fathers, while young women learn to become victims of abuse from the response of their mothers. While some studies suggest such a hypothesis, others argue that research samples are not enough to support the conclusion that a "cycle of violence" exists.

27. The personal costs to women can be overwhelming, ranging from physical, emotional and psychological injuries to an assault on their basic human rights, fundamental freedom and dignity and a threat to their economic survival and independence. The economic costs to society are vast. Studies in some countries indicate that the expenses involved in dealing with the problem, in terms of social and medical services to victims, the treatment of offenders and preventive measures, are very high. The social costs are enormous, ranging from instability in the family, an assault on women's dignity and the destruction of their self-worth to society's failure to respect the human rights and fundamental freedom of women and promote the peaceful resolution of conflict.

28. Beyond all such costs, however, lie the costs in terms of individual suffering and the deprivation of the peace and security of women, half of the human race, as well as of other individuals within the family and society at all levels.

D. Causes of violence against women

29. The causes of violence against women need to be isolated in order for the policy responses to it to be effective and appropriate. Many attempts have been made by researchers to identify the causes of the phenomenon.

30. Most efforts attempt to isolate an eradicable cause from among the possible factors. These factors can range from the individual characteristics of the wife, husband and family, in the case of domestic violence, through the general characteristics of the woman, man and society. Other factors that also affect interpersonal relations within the family and society are, for example the abuse of alcohol and drugs, past experience of violence, stress, frustration and mental illness, culture, economic hardship or underdevelopment and social and political instability.

31. In terms of individual characteristics, some researchers suggest that wife battery, rape and sexual assault and sexual harassment are caused by the behaviour or personality of the victim. Others suggest that such incidences

are caused by the excessive sex drive of the perpetrators. Some researchers believe that violence arises when a wife or woman reduces her husband's or a man's self-control by verbally tormenting him until he is no longer in control of his responses. Others conclude that women have a psychological need for domination, excitement and attention, and one theory goes so far as to hypothesize that women become addicted to the excitement and stimulation brought about by violence because of some form of chemical reaction. Some theorists have characterized men who are violent in the home as passive, indecisive and sexually inadequate. Their wives, on the other hand, are seen as being aggressive, masculine or masochistic. Others see men who abuse their wives as psychopaths. Looking at all of these hypotheses, however, it must be noted that while some violent men are indeed sick, the widespread incidence of domestic violence against women and the variety of personality types, of both female and male, who are involved in it would suggest that this is not a common cause of such conduct. A critical review of research findings indicates that while patterns of this nature may exist, they are not the norm.

32. Research in developed countries has shown that there seems to be a relationship between the consumption of alcohol and drugs and violence in the home. These substances play as significant a role in the instigation of domestic violence, as they do in violence in other contexts. Although research into the subject is very new in developing countries, similar findings have emerged from case studies on violence against women in the family carried out in some of these countries. A closer analysis of the studies suggests an association between the use of alcohol and violence against wives but that the relationship is not causal. Evidence exists to show that while many abusive husbands are heavy drinkers, many of the men who beat their wives when they are drunk also beat them when they are sober. Furthermore, drunkenness also exists in many families that are non-violent, and violence is present in families where there is no alcohol abuse. In cases where violence is associated with alcohol, however, the link is peculiarly male, as wives rarely become violent towards their husbands and children when inebriated. There is some evidence that male drunkenness, ultimately resulting in an assault on the wife, is linked with male drinking parties, during which men give each other support and encouragement and reaffirm their role as breadwinner and boss. Drunkenness, therefore, is perhaps best seen not as a "cause" of violence but as a condition that coexists with it.

33. A number of researchers locate the origins of assaults on wives in the childhood of the abusive man, suggesting that the violence occurs because he has witnessed or experienced violence in his family. They suggest that there is a clear trend for violence in childhood to produce violence in adult life and that violence by parents begets violence in the next generation. This has led to the theory that violence is learned behaviour and is cyclical. The validity of these findings has been questioned, since many of the supporting studies include no empirical data, rely mostly on self-reports from small criminal groups or produce data drawn on samples that are small and unrepresentative. Furthermore, there has been no serious attempt to study the general relationship between male children's experience in witnessing violence against women in society and their behaviour towards women as adults. Thus, while there is support for the theory that violence is cyclical, much more sophisticated research, in which violent and non-violent individuals from violent and non-violent homes and from violent and non-violent societies are compared, would be required to test it. It would be wrong to assume that all children of men who abuse their wives or all men who have themselves been abused during childhood will abuse their wives or that all male children who have witnessed violence against women in society will, throughout their lives, tend to abuse or use violence against women.

34. It is generally believed that stress and frustration resulting from economic hardship, low wages, bad housing, over-crowding and isolation, the lack of job opportunities for adolescents or school leavers, unfavourable and frustrating working conditions for men or the lack of a pleasant environment and recreational facilities for mothers and children might precipitate violence in the home. These conditions are particularly relevant in developing countries and among the underprivileged population of economically developed countries. While research into family violence is very new in developing countries, a number of scholars see family violence as a particular by-product of underdevelopment. They suggest that in a situation of underdevelopment violence becomes pervasive when there is political and economic deprivation and often the oppression of individuals, leading to social injustice. Case studies in a number of developing countries have revealed that a subsistence existence and economic hardship have led to domestic abuse. Such violence, in all its forms, is clearly directed towards the most powerless, the majority of whom are women and children.

35. While stress and frustration emanating from economic hardship may well be identified as a major cause for violence against women in the family, this theory fails to explain why all men in deprived circumstances are not violent to their wives and why men in economically privileged positions in economically developed societies can also be violent to their wives.

36. In a number of societies wife abuse is explained in terms of customs or beliefs. Surveys in some countries indicate that wife abuse occurs because beating is interpreted as showing that the man loves the woman, that this is expected by her and that she will feel rejected if she is not beaten. Studies in some other countries point to the custom of dowry as a precipitating factor in wife abuse. Dowry is an important part of the negotiations for an arranged marriage, and parents accept that if they wish their daughters to be married, they must provide a suitable dowry. The custom, combined with the growth in consumerism, has become, according to recent case studies from two countries, in some cases a life-and-death matter for the bride. Her husband or his family may consider the dowry that has been provided to be inadequate and may harass the woman, sometimes to the point of death by murder or suicide, in order to extract more from her natal family. Again, while certainly such customs may be factors in wife abuse, they do not explain why all husbands in such systems do not abuse their wives.

37. Similar explanations have been offered about other forms of violence against women in society: it is said to be individual characteristics of the violator or of the victim that explain the act. Looked at in aggregate, the existing empirical evidence reveals four generalizations:

(a) Violence in the family is primarily by men against women;

(b) Most victims of violence within the family and society are the weakest owing to their sex (women have been considered to be the weaker sex), age (children, youth, elderly) or physical fitness (disabled). It can also be in terms of dependency relationships of various natures (economic, employment rank or status in an organizational setting);

(c) Violence occurs when the imbalance of power is challenged and the perpetrator fails to recognize and respect the victim's basic human rights, fundamental freedom, dignity and right to peace and security and acts accordingly;

(d) Violence has always existed in various forms but it is only during the last decade that violence against women has been increasingly acknowledged to be a serious issue in terms of both magnitude and effect.

38. These findings, many of which emerged from research inspired by the feminist movement and the United Nations Decade for Women, have led scholars to look for the causes in societal structures, including the family, the Government and its institutions, social, cultural and political organizations and economic systems.

39. While the analysis of wife abuse as a structural rather than a causal phenomenon stemmed from the industrialized countries, studies from developing countries confirm rather than cast doubt on its validity. Studies suggest that family violence may be a by-product of a societal structure in which authority lies with the male and the female is conditioned to accept her secondary role. Violence may occur because the man wishes to take another wife, because he suspects his wife of infidelity or sees his wife as "rebellious" because of her ascending liberation, because of her "nagging" or because something is not done to his satisfaction, as when the wife gives birth to a girl. The origin of violence against women in the family is adduced to the structure of marriage, the family and the society, and it is impossible to understand the nature of wife assault without taking account of the social and ideological context within which it occurs. The analysis leads to the question of the status of women in the family as an institution and their status in society and the extent to which society at large, at all levels, condones a structure that supports the use of violence to maintain dominance over others who are in a weaker position: other sexes, individuals, groups, nations and even groups of nations.

40. There is thus no simple explanation for violence against women within the family and society. Any explanation must go beyond the individual characteristics of the man, the woman, the family and the society and consider the structure of relationships between individuals, groups or nations within which violence occurs and the role of society in underpinning that structure, especially through gender inequality. It is generally believed that the main cause of violence against women stems from their status and role in the family and society, and the unequal power structure therein, which places women in an inferior and subordinate position to men. It originates from a value system that underlies the structure of society and society's perception about women that is conducive to their continued subordination.

E. Prostitution as a form of violence

41. The issue of prostitution and the related issue of pornography have to be seen separately in the discussion of violence against women. They have been on the international agenda much longer than other aspects of the problem because of the transnational dimension of trafficking in persons. The League of Nations considered the subjects of traffic in women and children, traffic in women of full age and traffic in obscene publications in 1921, 1933 and 1923, respectively, in the form of conventions which it adopted. The first two were combined in the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 317 (IV) of 2 December 1949. The International Convention for the Suppression of the Circulation of and Traffic in Obscene Publications, concluded on 12 December 1923, was amended by Protocol of 12 November 1947.

42. In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/20 of 4 May 1982, the Secretary-General appointed a Special Rapporteur to prepare a synthesis of the surveys and studies on the traffic in persons and the exploitation of the prostitution of others and to propose appropriate measures to prevent and suppress those practices that are contrary to the fundamental rights of human

beings. The Special Rapporteur noted that, in using the words "traffic in persons", the Council was referring to the exploitation of the prostitution of women and children, excluding other forms of exploitation or slavery. 13/

43. One issue is the extent to which prostitution is a form of violence. In his report, the Special Rapporteur noted that prostitution can be approached from the angle of ethnology, sociology or cultural history: from the angle of political economy, from which the world of prostitution can be seen as a closed economic system; or from the angle of criminology, as a branch of the criminal world because of the procuring involved. Prostitution can also be judged by the standards of public health, religion or morality. 14/

44. The possibility exists that prostitution may be a freely chosen activity and, if so, not a matter of violence per se. The Special Rapporteur, however, after reviewing his evidence, concluded that "even when prostitution seems to have been chosen freely, it is actually the result of coercion". 15/

45. The Special Rapporteur stated in the conclusion of his report that:

"At the heart of the struggle for respect and promotion of human rights, a more specific struggle is to be waged for the liberation of women and the protection of children because they, together with the poor, are least equipped to defend themselves. Many violations of human rights are committed through a lust for power, for revenge or through ideological passion. Those categorized as traffic in persons, even more odious, are motivated solely by the desire for profit. They attack the most fragile persons when they are in the most vulnerable situations: poverty, loneliness, depression". 16/

46. The Special Rapporteur also noted that prostitution "is found today to varying degrees in all States, in all cultures and in all parts of the world". 17/ It is generally considered to be normal and inevitable, and such traffic mainly flows from the developing world towards developed nations or from underprivileged ethnic or social groups towards other better-off groups in the same part of the world or even in the same country. 18/ The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others was adopted by the General Assembly by a fairly small majority and has been ratified or acceded to by only 59 and signed by 14 States as of 31 December 1986; this may indicate that many States have not felt that the problem is serious or requires structural changes in society, particularly in the legal and economic fields, which accession to an international convention might imply.

47. The Special Rapporteur noted three parallel trends in State practice toward prostitution: prohibition, regulation and abolition. In prohibition, prostitution is made illegal and the prostitute punished; this discriminates between men and women since it does not punish the client. In regulation, prostitution is generally tolerated and considered to be "a necessary evil"; it is regulated for the sake of hygiene or decency in public places. The most recent trend, abolition, is reflected in the Convention on the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. Under abolition, although prostitution is considered incompatible with the dignity of the human person, it is not prohibited for it is regarded as a personal choice and hence a private matter; the aim, instead, is to abolish the exploitation of prostitution.

48. A recent international examination of the issue is found in a study entitled "Towards a comprehensive perspective of female prostitution in Asia" (ST/ESCAP/360), commissioned by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia

and the Pacific (ESCAP) for its Workshop of Experts in 1985. The conclusion drawn in that study was that female prostitution as manifested in some Asian countries could not be examined in isolation and limited to culturally specific variables. It must be understood against a very complex background. That background had at least two dimensions: (a) the structural aspects rooted in the historical development of the social relationship between men and women, which cause prostitution universally; and (b) the conjunctural aspects resulting from specific State policies adopted in the current period of history which exacerbate the phenomenon. It is, therefore, no longer possible to argue that prostitution forms a distinctive social institution emerging from contradictions in the moral system. Instead, prostitution is increasingly acquiring an economic base, which not only interacts but also becomes intertwined with the rest of the economy, making it part of the transformation of the labour process rather than a moral issue. The degree of interaction between prostitution and the economy determines the entrenchment of vested interests and in turn defines the challenge to policy-makers who intend to rectify the situation. The conventional approach to the rehabilitation of prostitutes as deviant females is not likely to bring any significant change. Policies that are aimed at changing the situation must first and foremost concentrate on improving the social, economic and working conditions of women in general and prostitutes in particular.

49. The Workshop recommended plans of action for the prevention of prostitution and for the rehabilitation of former prostitutes. In the plan of action for prevention, the Workshop emphasized that equality before the law and equality of opportunities was a way of eliminating some of the causes of involuntary prostitution. It recommended campaigns to change traditional attitudes that perpetuated gender inequality through such concepts as male promiscuity as proof of virility and pre-marital loss of female virginity as equivalent to the loss of honour and respectability. It also called for educational campaigns and a new review of legislation.

50. A further examination of the issue took place at an international meeting of experts organized by UNESCO on the social and cultural causes of prostitution and strategies for the struggle against procuring and sexual exploitation of women (Madrid, Spain, 18-21 March 1986). That meeting stated that it refused "to make a distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution" and "to recognize prostitution as a profession". It found that the commodity exchange of a woman's body caused a severe problem in the breakdown of a woman's identity and a destruction of her sense of self-worth. It noted a connection with violence in the family, particularly the sexual assault of children. 18/

51. The meeting noted, inter alia, that socio-economic structures that dominated human beings established a pretext for prostitution. Where there was an alienation of labour, the displacement of refugee persons, male immigration that separated men from their families, the debilitation of men fighting in war, the "sexuality of prostitution" became for men an amelioration of their social circumstances. It proposed a number of educational and research activities for UNESCO, including research on the socio-cultural mechanisms of sexual violence and the prostitution of women and on all forms of sexual violence, especially in families, as one of the causes of prostitution.

III. EFFORTS TO ERADICATE THE PROBLEM

A. General responses

52. It has only been recently that countries, individually and collectively, have started to acknowledge the issue of violence within the family, rape and sexual assault and sexual harassment as an alarming one and have attempted to address the plight of women victims. Some countries have recognized the problem earlier than others and have had a longer period in which to develop strategies to confront violence against women within the home. Even in the countries that claim to have recognized the issue at an early stage, much work remains to be done, as even such recognition has occurred only within the last 20 years.

53. Responses to violence against women in the family are coloured in all societies by a number of important social values. The family is a private place, a source of comfort and nurture for its members, and as such should be regarded as sacred. Members are severely constrained from seeking help outside the family. Intervention from outsiders, even in the face of clear family disfunction, is discouraged. Violence within the family, therefore, is ignored or trivialized because acknowledgement of its existence would infringe upon the privacy of the family. Recognition of the family as the natural and fundamental unit of society presupposes that the family is an institution built on love and security and, as such, is the ideal environment for the upbringing of children and the individual growth of its members. The maintenance of the family as a unit may thus take precedence over the safety of women. A certain level of family violence is condoned by most societies. The physical discipline of children is allowed and, indeed, encouraged, and a large number of countries allow moderate physical chastisement of a wife. These values, which legitimize a certain level of wife abuse, still influence most strategies undertaken so far to deal with violence against wives.

B. Specific efforts at the international and regional levels

54. A number of recent international forums have considered the issue of violence against women. The results of these debates and the solutions that were proposed are presented below.

1. Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family with Special Emphasis on its Effects on Women

55. The Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family with Special Emphasis on its Effects on Women, which was organized by the United Nations Office at Vienna from 8 to 12 December 1986 pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/14, produced a set of recommendations that covered various areas for action by Governments and non-governmental organizations at the international, regional and national levels. The report of the Meeting, which contains detailed recommendations, has been widely distributed to national machineries for women, United Nations organizations and other interested governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions.

2. Eradication of harmful practices affecting the health of women and children

56. A seminar on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children in Africa was organized in February 1984, at Dakar, by the Ministry of Public Health of Senegal and the non-governmental organizations' Working

Group on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The seminar, which was attended by representatives of 20 African countries, formulated proposals for the eradication of such practices and set up an Inter-African Committee to deal with the issue. In April 1987, this Committee organized a regional seminar on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children. The seminar was co-sponsored by the Ministry of Health of Ethiopia, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), UNICEF, WHO and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and was attended by representatives of 26 African countries. A Plan of Action for the Eradication of Harmful Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children was adopted by the seminar.

57. In 1986, the Commission on Human Rights, at its forty-second session, considered an extensive report prepared by its Working Group on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (E/CN.4/1986/42) and adopted resolution 1986/28 on this report, in which it requested the Secretary-General to transmit the report to Governments, the competent organizations and specialized agencies and to draw their attention to the recommendations contained therein. It also called upon the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and the interested non-governmental organizations to provide assistance to Governments, upon their request, to combat such practices.

3. A manual for Commonwealth action

58. A manual entitled Confronting Violence: A Manual for Commonwealth Action 19/ was issued by the Commonwealth Secretariat in the summer of 1987 in response to a mandate from Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs. The Manual was designed to promote Commonwealth action against domestic violence, sexual abuse and sexual harassment. The Manual does not attempt to deal with wider definitions of what constitutes violence against women nor does it deal with the question of institutionalized violence. It consists of three parts, and each part contains recommendations of the multi-disciplinary meeting and an analysis of relevant aspects. In part I, an analysis is presented related to the extent of the problem and the search for explanations, legal approaches, breaking the silence, alcohol-related violence and refuges and support services. Part II consists of an analysis related to sexual assaults and sexual harassment and contains a sexual assault kit. Part III contains an analysis related to dowry and the sexual abuse of children, guidelines for interviewing child victims of sexual abuse, a discussion of the role played by the media and suggestions on ways in which women can work with the media to change the image and the message.

4. Measures in the social field

59. A Colloquy on Violence within the Family: Measures in the Social Field, organized by the Council of Europe in November 1987, focused discussions on two main themes: the concept of violence in the family and preventive measures. On the basis of 18 national reports, two analytical summaries with respect to violence against women were presented: "Psychological and social aspects" and "Criminal and family law aspects".

60. With respect to general preventive measures, the Colloquy agreed that there were certain principles that must underlie all policies designed to prevent and remedy violence within the family, such as the need for a change in the consciousness of society; the promotion of non-violent settlement of

conflicts and discouragement of misuse of power; and the reduction of social and economic pressures on the family. The Colloquy also agreed that those principles implied certain basic information, prevention and remedial measures, such as full facts concerning the extent and seriousness of the problem; that preventive measures should be comprehensive; and that full social equality between the sexes needed to be implemented.

61. As for specific measures, the Colloquy identified the following areas for action: information; support for families; care of children; care of frail old people; education and training; the role of voluntary associations; the detection and reporting of violence; co-ordination of the approach used by social workers; help and therapy for the whole family; specific needs of abused children; women and the elderly; and the treatment of offenders. In the field of law, the Colloquy pointed out the need to encourage Member States to review criminal and civil legislation concerning violence within the family and stated that penal judicial measures should not be considered to be the one and only recourse against the offender. With regard to international co-operation, the Colloquy identified the following areas: collection and wider dissemination of data and information; exchange of concerned professionals; study of problems concerning violence against the elderly; and evaluation of policies and actions undertaken at national level.

5. Psychosocial consequence of violence

62. A Working Group on Psychosocial Consequences of Violence, 20/ convened in 1981 by WHO in collaboration with the Netherlands, discussed ways and means to improve services for the victims of violence in order to prevent or reduce long-term harmful effects on their mental health. Although the main theme dealt with violence in general, in its conclusions and recommendations, the Working Group placed emphasis on the special conditions of women.

63. Under the section on "Social dimensions of the consequences of violence", the following references to women were made: "scientific investigators and care-providers must guard against selective inattentions towards certain types of violence, 'official' definitions of violence which tend to produce scape-goats of marginal groups in society and concern about the 'victim-status' of individuals without consideration of the processes that have led to their becoming victims (e.g. the position of women in society in relation to assaults on women)" and "changes in public attitudes may lead to changes in the incidence of certain forms of violence, for example infanticide or unwanted babies has been much rarer since attitudes towards unmarried mothers became less harsh and judgmental". Two special sections were devoted to the problem of women victims of violence, namely, "violence by men against women within the family" and "rape".

6. Training seminar on violence against women

64. A training seminar for Research on Violence against Women was held in March 1987 within the context of the priority areas covered by the Women in Development Work Programme endorsed by the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC). The seminar was organized jointly by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, the Women's Bureau; the Ministry of Community Development, Housing and Social Affairs of the Dominican Republic; and the Dominican National Council of Women. It was pointed out at the seminar that research was one of the areas in which efforts needed to be intensified, as the cause for increased acts of violence against women constituted a complex question, the analysis of which required in-depth studies, among others, into

the breakdown of traditional community and family support systems, social effects of the economic crisis, and the dynamic of power in men-women relationships.

7. Publication on an overview of current research on violence against women in the family

65. The Branch for the Advancement of Women of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Office at Vienna, with funds provided by the Government of Norway, conducted an overview of current research on the subject. It asked 16 national experts from all regions to prepare case studies in order to describe violence against women in the family as a world issue requiring concerted action at family, community, national, regional and international levels for its solution. In the study, an attempt is also made to identify areas in which there is insufficient knowledge of the issue, which thus creates an obstacle with regard to understanding the problem and developing appropriate action for its eradication. Results of this activity will be issued as a United Nations sales publication in 1988.

C. Efforts at the national level

66. A review of a limited number of national efforts indicates that the problem is not insoluble. National commitment in the form of clear policies reflecting recognition of the problem, the institutionalization of action, and the commitment of resources seems essential to provide a basis for effective action. An approach involving a multi-disciplinary perspective and co-ordination between respective institutions and organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, appears to achieve more success in dealing with the problem than approaches taken in isolation.

67. The institutionalization of efforts, including the establishment of mechanisms for co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluating action at various levels, is important. Aspects such as policy formulation, planning, programming and implementation, particularly with respect to reporting and data collection systems, should be covered. In establishing such mechanisms on a general basis, numerous problems are generally encountered.

68. While a distinction between short-term and long-term measures is necessary, experience shows that short-term measures are only effective if they constitute an integral component of long-term measures. Experience in many countries also shows that while socio-cultural measures are important and in many societies may be preferable, legal measures are essential. Proper links between both types of measures, at both the theoretical and empirical levels, are necessary. For example, national experience demonstrates the significant role played by the media in promoting both negative and positive responses to the efforts to eradicate violence against women. In addition, the need for specific education and training programmes is well recognized. Curricula aimed at enforcing the value of equality between the sexes, at condemning violence of all forms and against anyone and at promoting the peaceful resolution of conflicts of any kind between any individuals, groups, nations or groups of nations should be developed. Special training for relevant professions, particularly those concerned with protection and assistance to women victims, appears to be of crucial importance, as does training for journalists. Education and training constitutes an area where the link between short-term protective and treatment measures and long-term preventive strategies can best be integrated.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

69. The issue of violence against women in the family and society is a serious issue in terms of pervasiveness, magnitude and effect. The issue is complex, multi-dimensional and crosses all barriers of class, income, race, culture and religion. Efforts towards its eradication necessarily encompass solutions that are short- and long-term and that require local, national, regional and international action, on a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral basis.

70. Although the Expert Group Meeting held in 1986 focused on violence in the family, it also addressed the issue of violence against women in general. Its conclusions and recommendations therefore addressed violence against women in the family as well as in society as a whole. The following list of conclusions and recommendations, drawn largely from the report of that Meeting, are included in the present report as an indicative list of activities that might usefully be undertaken at the national, regional and international levels. The recommendations of the Meeting on criminal justice and justice systems, which covers general aspects, the police, orders of prosecution, courts, bail or conditions of release, prosecution, evidence, sentencing, training and co-operation, civil process and criminal justice research and evaluation will be submitted to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Control at its tenth session in August 1988.

A. General

71. While the problem is complex and requires careful solutions, the real answers lie within the greater notion of the inherent equality of women and men and how each society respects that basic equality and ensures and enhances it in all its most fundamental aspects.

72. It is essential to provide immediate protection and assistance to women who are physically, emotionally, sexually, economically or otherwise abused. Such protection must be co-ordinated and multi-faceted, including legal, health, social service support and community support.

73. Efforts should encompass solutions that are short-term and long-term and that require regional, national and international action. Interrelated and comprehensive structural measures, however, are critical to ultimately eradicating the problem.

74. In many instances where women are subjected to violence in the family, their children are also victimized. It is well known that children may be victims of physical and sexual abuse in families even when their mothers are not. These are a separate set of issues, requiring different models of response. Therefore, specific consideration should be given to recommending to Member States action in relation to measures to combat the physical and sexual abuse of children.

75. While information and consciousness about the extent and nature of the problems are increasing, they can be further improved. The collection and dissemination of accurate information on incidences, available services and assistance for victims and perpetrators as well as on the nature, causes and effects of such violence are important. This calls for systematic reporting for the purpose of both intervention and the dissemination of information for raising public awareness. Those involved include victims, witnesses, police, medical and social workers, the media and even the perpetrators. Furthermore, more research is needed on the relationship between violence within the family and society and the extent to which contributing factors, such as economic

hardship and all its associated aspects, the social structure, political instability and armed conflicts increase violence against women, lower public awareness of the problem or restrain efforts towards its solution.

76. A form of evaluative research should be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of current efforts in terms of their response to women's interests, their socio-cultural acceptability, resource allocation and the integration of short- and long-term strategies. Some subjects meriting further examination include: the effectiveness of "shelter" in various environmental contexts; the effectiveness of criminal justice, social welfare and socio-cultural approaches; the effect of bringing cases into the family court rather than the criminal court or vice-versa; the relationship between the effectiveness of the police in crisis intervention, their attitudes towards women and the level of their professional skills to deal with the problem; and the problems faced by women victims with regards to access to available services, including legal remedies. In the latter case, problems relate not only to a lack of knowledge or information about available services but also to the attitude of those who are employed to provide assistance to women victims. In line with General Assembly resolution 40/36 on Domestic violence, the important role played by the criminal and civil justice systems both in ensuring the fair treatment of female victims and offenders in cases of domestic violence as well as in the prevention of such violence is recognized and emphasized.

77. The provisions of the Declaration of Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/34 of 29 November 1985, should apply with particular priority to women who are victims of violence in the family. In particular, action should be taken to ensure that compensation schemes for victims of crime apply to women who are victims of violence in the family and that appropriate aid is available to those victims to enable them to take reasonable steps to protect themselves from further violence.

78. States that have not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should be urged to do so, and those that have become States parties should be urged to comply with the provisions of the Convention.

B. Specific recommendations

1. International and regional level

79. Research on the extent, prevention and effects of violence against women in the family and society and the effectiveness of the responses to it should be undertaken.

80. A kit on "violence against women in the family and in society" should be prepared.

81. International and regional meetings should be organized every five years in order to assess the progress made on these recommendations, and a clearing-house for permanent international networking on this issue should be established.

82. Relevant United Nations agencies and bodies and other international and regional organizations dealing with health, the family, security and child-related matters should make the issue of violence against women in the family and society a priority and direct their programmes to address this problem.

83. The results of discussions at international and regional meetings should be disseminated promptly and in several languages to facilitate their use internationally.

84. The United Nations and its specialized agencies should assist in the dissemination of relevant information on this problem to Governments.

85. A periodical review of research findings in the field of violence against women in the family and society will inform Governments of the application of research and findings and will allow them to consider the relevance of such findings to their respective programmes and strategies to combat the problem.

86. Texts that are prepared or amended in response to these recommendations should be drafted in gender neutral terms to apply to women and men, although most victims of violence in the family are women.

87. The United Nations should support efforts to ensure that national, regional and international co-operation as well as national policies to deal with violence against women in the family and society correspond to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

88. The United Nations system, through its various programmes, should continue to promote national and international co-operation on violence against women in the family and society.

89. Research should be undertaken into the nature, extent and effects of violence against women and the effectiveness of responses to it, especially research of a cross-cultural nature. The results should be disseminated as widely as possible by traditional and non-traditional media, bearing in mind the necessity of translating the pertinent information into local languages and into other forms of communication suitable for non-literate audiences.

90. International organizations should expand programmes to give resource assistance to national efforts to raise public awareness of violent practices against women as a grave form of discrimination, give priority to combatting violence against women in the family and society within their programmes and ensure an exchange of ideas and experiences between their member countries. They should also co-operate with the United Nations and its regional commissions.

91. Existing governmental and non-governmental institutes and organizations that are active or interested in the field should be mobilized and used effectively.

92. Emphasis should be placed on the need to ensure that all efforts are undertaken within the context of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and all relevant international instruments, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as the eradication of violence against women within the family and society calls for a concrete effort to overcome one of the major obstacles to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace.

93. To implement these recommendations, consideration should be given to developing a network of relevant organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels.

94. Monitoring systems and guidelines should be created through related professional associations, appropriate to each country, to guide the media from the point of view of the prevention of violence against women both within and outside the home.

95. Teachers should be systematically oriented towards and receive training in imparting to students values of equal rights and responsibilities, mutual respect, partnership, tolerance, understanding and peaceful conflict resolution.

2. National level

(a) Resource support

96. Governments should set up administrative departments or multi-disciplinary boards with the task of looking after women who are victims of violence in the family and with powers to deal with such cases.

97. Governments should make every effort to guarantee financial support to battered women who have no other source of income. Women's equal access to existing social security and welfare services should be assured as an important part of a national policy of social justice.

98. Job training, re-entry and employment programmes should be structured to address the needs of battered women.

99. Adequate financial support for existing shelters and refuges should be provided by Governments and non-governmental organizations. Shelters, or their local equivalent such as a network of safe houses, should be created where they do not exist.

100. Governments should fund multi-media community education programmes to combat violence against women in community languages.

(b) Participation and co-operation

101. The problem of violence against women in general should be viewed as an important part of a national policy of social justice for the advancement of women. The main task of such a policy should be to ensure the equal treatment of women and men within society in all fields, e.g., socio-economic, political, legal and cultural life. Women should be active participants in the development of that policy at all stages, including decision-making at all levels, and should participate fully in the implementation of such decisions.

102. All Governments should draw up coherent national strategies to combat violence against women in the family and society. They should establish policies and legislative measures in the health, social, cultural, economic and judicial fields to prevent and eliminate such violence and also to increase public awareness.

103. Women victims of violence should be given co-ordinated comprehensive assistance. Therefore, a focal point at the national level in each Government should be assigned the responsibility to deal with violence against women within the family and society. Policies should be elaborated and institutionalized to provide assistance.

104. Governments should ensure that research findings form an integral part of co-ordinated policy and programme development at all levels.

(c) Health, treatment and good practice

105. Services and programmes to respond to violence against women in the family should be recognized as a primary health care need and included in primary health care manuals and education programmes and in the training of

106. Professional associations in the fields of medicine, nursing, law, therapy, social work, pastoral, education and other relevant groups should develop codes of good practice for dealing with violence against women in the family and society.

107. Crime prevention agencies and health and welfare agencies should set up programmes for batterers, in recognition of the importance of providing treatment for them.

108. Perpetrators of violence against women should have the opportunity to be educated to inculcate in them a sense of dignity and respect for others and to create public awareness in this regard.

109. Doctors and hospital personnel should, on the one hand, be sensitized to the various aspects of violence against women in the family and, on the other hand, when they consider it in the best interests of the victim, report cases of personal injury to the police independently of the victim, who, under threat of further violence, may not be in a position to make such a report.

110. Medical and para-medical personnel should be systematically trained in the identification, care and follow-up of cases involving violence against women in the family, and, for this purpose, training materials including guidelines, manuals, kits etc. should be developed in each country.

111. Governments should initiate pilot projects to try out new methods in the social, health and legal sectors dealing with violence against women in the family.

(d) Education, public awareness and images of women

112. International, national, regional and local non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to continue their excellent contribution, especially in disseminating information and in supporting programmes aimed at combatting the problem of violence against women in the family and society.

113. Unbalanced power relationships in the family, school and society in general that lead to abuse, exploitation and violence against women and children should be eliminated through concerted measures on the part of the entire community.

114. Formal education systems should include instruction on preparation for family life and parental responsibilities and the teaching of peaceful conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships and human rights. Such subjects should be integrated into the official school curriculum from the earliest grades onwards for both boys and girls.

115. Governments, non-governmental organizations, special groups and professional associations, within their responsibilities and powers, should take measures to eliminate violence against and degrading images and representations of women in society.

116. Public awareness of violence against women in the family and society should be increased by all Governments, non-governmental organizations and special groups. Governments should disseminate, as well as encourage and assist governmental and non-governmental organizations to disseminate, information aimed at combatting violence against women so as to ensure that the public is aware of the problem.

117. Innovative methods of informal education and consciousness raising, such as street theatre, wall art and the like, should be encouraged and facilitated.
118. The media should be encouraged by monitoring or self-monitoring to avoid conveying the message that violence against women, particularly in the family, is acceptable or is a trivial matter and should be encouraged to promote gender equality, human rights and social change to ensure the equal treatment of women.
119. Local community co-operation should be used to help organize seminars at the grass-roots level to help women speak out about the problem of violence in the family in order to de-stigmatize this problem and to facilitate communication concerning its consequences and possible solutions.
120. Governments should encourage and support an examination and publication of the role of women's contribution to their country's historical development and undertake initiatives to introduce non-gender-specific language and gender-specific information in all official communications and materials, including text books.
121. Both formal and informal education programmes should be reviewed to provide an effective approach towards inculcating the values of equality of roles, dignity and rights.
122. Educational curricula at all levels should be reviewed and reformulated so as to emphasize the principles of gender equality, partnership, tolerance, mutual respect, self-reliance and self-esteem.
123. A comprehensive programme should be evolved to improve the knowledge and skills of women in communications techniques in order to encourage their advancement into decision-making positions in this field.
124. Monitoring systems and guidelines should be created through the related professional associations, appropriate to each country, to guide the media from the point of view of the prevention of violence against women both within and outside the home.
125. Teachers should be systematically oriented towards imparting, and trained in skills to impart to students, values of equal rights and responsibilities, mutual respect, partnership, tolerance, understanding and peaceful conflict resolution.

Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico City, 19 June-2 July 1975 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.1), chap. II, sect. A, paras. 124 and 131.

2/ Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen, 14-30 July 1980 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.IV.3), chap. I, sect. A, para. 141(f).

3/ Ibid., sect. B.

4/ Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Caracas, Venezuela, 25 August-5 September 1980: Report prepared by the Secretariat (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.81.IV.4), chap. I, sect. B.

5/ "Report of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control on its Seventh Session" (E/CN.5/1983/2), chap. IV, sect. B, paras. 106 and 138.

6/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

7/ Ibid., chap. III, sect. B, para. 258.

8/ Ibid., chap. IV, sect. E, para. 288.

9/ Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Milan, 25 August-6 September 1985: Report prepared by the Secretariat (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.IV.1), chap. IV, sect. C, paras. 230, 232 and 233.

10/ Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family with Special Emphasis on its Effects on Women, Vienna, 8-12 December 1986, para. 92.

11/ Commonwealth Secretariat, Confronting Violence. A Manual for Commonwealth Action. (London, 1987).

12/ Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family with Special Emphasis on its Effects on Women, op. cit., para. 5.

13/ Activities for the Advancement of Women: Equality, Development and Peace. Report of Jean Fernand-Laurent, Special Rapporteur on the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.11), para. 3.

14/ Ibid., para. 17.

15/ Ibid., para. 23.

16/ Ibid., para. 104.

17/ Ibid., para. 16.

18/ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "International Meeting of Experts on the Social and Cultural Causes of Prostitution and Strategies for the Struggle against Procuring and Sexual Exploitation of Women, Madrid, Spain, 18-21 March 1986" (SHS-85/CONF.608/14).

19/ Commonwealth Secretariat, op. cit.

20/ "Helping victims of violence: proceedings of a Working Group on Psychosocial Consequences of Violence" (MY/522/43/12).