

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General
2 February 2012

Original: English

**Commission on Crime Prevention
and Criminal Justice****Twenty-first session**

Vienna, 23-27 April 2012

Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

**Use and application of United Nations standards and
norms in crime prevention and criminal justice****Strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice
responses to violence against women****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/228. It contains an analysis of the replies received from Member States on national crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women clustered according to the following thematic areas: (a) criminal law; (b) criminal procedure; (c) police, prosecutors and other criminal justice officials; (d) sentencing and corrections; (e) victim support and assistance, health and social services; (f) training; (g) research and evaluation; (h) crime prevention measures; and (i) international cooperation. It further contains a summary of the main activities undertaken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime during the reporting period to prevent and respond to violence against women.

* E/CN.15/2012/1.



Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	3
II. National crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women.	4
A. Criminal law	4
B. Criminal procedure	6
C. Police, prosecutors and other criminal justice officials.	7
D. Sentencing and corrections	8
E. Victim support and assistance, health and social services	9
F. Training	10
G. Research and evaluation	11
H. Crime prevention measures	12
I. International cooperation.	14
III. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime activities to prevent and respond to violence against women	14
IV. Conclusions and recommendations	18

I. Introduction

1. On 21 December 2010, the General Assembly, upon the recommendation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Economic and Social Council,¹ adopted resolution 65/228, entitled “Strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women”, annexed to which were the updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

2. The updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice recognize that violence against women is a phenomenon that exists in every country in the world as a pervasive violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality, development and peace. They also acknowledge the need for an active policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies, programmes and practices to ensure gender equality and equal and fair access to justice, and represent a comprehensive framework to assist States in developing policies and carrying out actions to eliminate violence against women and to promote equality between men and women within the criminal justice system.

3. In its resolution 65/228, the General Assembly urged Member States to end impunity for violence against women by investigating, prosecuting with due process and punishing all perpetrators; to enhance their mechanisms and procedures for protecting victims of violence against women in the criminal justice system; to advance effective crime prevention and criminal justice strategies that address violence against women; and to evaluate and review their legislation and legal principles, procedures, policies, programmes and practices relating to crime prevention and criminal justice matters, in a manner consistent with their legal systems and drawing upon the updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures.

4. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to support national efforts to promote the empowerment of women and gender equality in order to enhance national efforts to eliminate violence against women, including by strengthening throughout its programme of work its crime prevention and criminal justice efforts in response to violence against women. UNODC was also asked to continue to offer training and capacity-building opportunities, in particular for practitioners working in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice and providers of support services to victims of violence against women; to make available and disseminate information on successful intervention models, preventive programmes and other practices; and to intensify its efforts to ensure the widest possible use and dissemination of the updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures.

5. Also in its resolution 65/228, the General Assembly invited UNODC to strengthen coordination in its activities in the area of violence against women with other relevant entities of the United Nations system, as well as other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) so as to make efficient use of financial, technical, material and human resources. Furthermore, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Commission on Crime

¹ Economic and Social Council resolution 2010/15.

Prevention and Criminal Justice at its twenty-first session on the implementation of the resolution.

6. Pursuant to the mandate described above, a note verbale was sent to all Member States requesting information on national crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women. At the time of drafting of the present report, the following 29 Member States had provided a reply: Afghanistan, Belarus, Belgium, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Oman, Philippines, Qatar, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

7. The present report analyses the replies received from Member States structured according to the following clusters: (a) criminal law; (b) criminal procedure; (c) police, prosecutors and other criminal justice officials; (d) sentencing and corrections; (e) victim support and assistance, health and social services; (f) training; (g) research and evaluation; (h) crime prevention measures; and (i) international cooperation.

8. The report also contains a summary of the main activities undertaken by UNODC during the reporting period to prevent and respond to violence against women.

II. National crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women

A. Criminal law

9. The responding States reported that in their countries national legislation ensured that all persons were equal before the law and citizens were protected from violence. Several countries noted that their criminal codes comprehensively criminalized violence against women² or gender-based violence, including assault, homicide, trafficking in persons, non-consensual sexual acts, sexual abuse of children, forcible confinement and domestic violence. Germany reported that acts of violence against women — depending on the circumstances of the individual case — could be punished as crimes against humanity or as war crimes and that the concept of “honour” did not exempt perpetrators from criminal responsibility. The United Kingdom reported that the law on murder had been reformed to narrow the circumstances in which a defendant was able to plead the partial defence of provocation, making that plea available only in extremely limited circumstances.

² In line with the updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the term “women” encompasses “girl children” except where otherwise specified.

10. Several Member States reported that their national laws, policies and strategies were brought into line with relevant international instruments related to violence against women with a view to furthering their fair and effective implementation.³

11. With regard to violence against women in cases where the perpetrator had a close relationship with the victim, several Member States reported that domestic violence, including rape, was criminalized. Spain reported that it differentiated between “domestic violence” (i.e. violence in the family, regardless of who committed the crime) and “gender violence” (i.e. physical and psychological violence by a man against a woman who was or had been his spouse or had been linked to him in a similar intimate relationship, even without living together) and that the law on gender violence allowed for comprehensive and coordinated protection measures. Belgium reported that, according to its national legislation, a crime against a spouse did constitute an aggravating factor and that draft legislation was currently under consideration, including legislation that would deal with domestic violence and support for victims. Finland reported that on the basis of a change in the penal code in 2001, so-called petty assaults had been moved from the category of complainant offences to crimes under public prosecution when they took place at home, or when the offender was a family member.

12. Most of the responding States indicated that their laws protected persons against sexual acts that were not based on the consent of both parties. In this regard, Sweden reported that criminal responsibility for sexual crimes, such as rape, was not affected by the relationship between offender and victim and that the crime of rape had been expanded to include the most serious cases of sexual exploitation. Belarus noted that its criminal law provided for penalties for rape, sexual assault, coercion to engage in acts of a sexual nature, inciting prostitution or coercion to continue engaging in prostitution, and trafficking in persons. In addition, various States reported that female genital mutilation was prohibited and punishable under their legislation. Oman reported that its draft Child Law was expected to include the prohibition of traditional practices harmful to the health of children.

13. Regarding crimes against children, most of the responding States reported that penal provisions for crimes against children, including rape, sexual exploitation and abuse, had been introduced in their national legislation. Sweden indicated that its penal code made it possible to convict perpetrators who committed serious sexual crimes against children abroad, while Canada reported that it was committed to increasing penalties for sexual offenders against children and strengthening the sex-offender registry. In connection with crimes committed through the use of new information technologies, Canada reported that it was mandatory for those supplying Internet services to report cases of online child pornography and that a national strategy had been launched to protect children from sexual exploitation on the Internet by increasing law enforcement capacity in that field. Oman provided

³ International instruments mentioned in this regard include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

information on its recent Law for Combating Cybercrime, promulgated by Royal Decree No. 12/2011, which — together with the Anti-Trafficking Law, promulgated by Royal Decree No. 136/2008 — ensured the protection of all children from violence and sexual abuse and from sexual exploitation for commercial purposes. The Islamic Republic of Iran reported that its legislation prohibited any kind of psychological or physical harassment of children and adolescents and that when a crime was committed against a child, that was considered an aggravating factor.

14. Several countries reported that trafficking in human beings was criminalized under their domestic legislation and that laws and procedures were in place to prevent and combat that crime. Cambodia reported that its Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of 2008 did not criminalize prostitution itself but rather the act of procuring and soliciting, and that it protected all people from sexual violence, sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation and sexual harassment, including crimes committed through the use of new technologies. Mexico indicated that it had established a Special Prosecutor's Office for crimes of violence against women and trafficking in human beings.

15. Several Member States reported that individuals could be prohibited or restrained from harassing, intimidating or threatening women, noting that protection orders or restraining orders were available to prevent domestic violence or to reduce the risk of further domestic violence occurring. Malta reported that its national legislation provided that, together with or separately from a protection order, a treatment order could be given without the consent of the convicted person. Sweden reported that it allowed — in certain conditions — the electronic monitoring of a person who was subject to a restraining order. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reported that restraining orders could be invoked under national legislation but that that mechanism did not in practice manage to overcome the practical problems derived from the ownership of the real estate, among other circumstances. Finally, some Member States reported that perpetrators of violent crimes could be restricted regarding their possession and use of firearms.

B. Criminal procedure

16. Most countries reported on national criminal procedure provisions that were relevant for cases of violence against women. In particular, some States reported that their law enforcement agencies were authorized to enter premises and conduct arrests in cases of violence against women and to prevent immediate harm. Germany indicated that the applicable criminal law and criminal procedure law provided effective mechanisms for prosecuting violence against women and that law enforcement agencies and courts used all options available to them under the law to prosecute criminal offences effectively, as well as to impose appropriate penalties on perpetrators and to protect the victims of violent offences. In particular, Germany reported that searches and arrests, as part of investigations into incidents related to violence against women, could be carried out without a judicial decision in cases of urgency. It also indicated that the national criminal procedure law contained a number of provisions to ensure protection against secondary victimization. Finland and Thailand reported that cases of violence against women were handled on an urgent basis in accordance with the national criminal procedure provisions.

17. Some countries reported on national provisions to allow victims of sexual violence to participate actively in the criminal proceedings, including those related to the conditional release of the perpetrator. Sweden replied that a court could decide that a witness or a victim should be questioned by telephone instead of attending in person to protect her privacy, identity and dignity and that it was also possible to give testimony by videoconference. Iran (Islamic Republic of), Sweden and Switzerland provided information on national measures to avoid confrontations between victims and their offenders in court, and Thailand reported that a victim's privacy was protected by prohibiting the disclosure of identifying information. Canada and the Philippines reported that "battered woman syndrome"⁴ was taken into account during criminal procedures. Canada further noted that "similar fact evidence" (i.e. evidence of previous wrongful acts) was admissible when the prosecution satisfied the trial judge that the probative value of the evidence in relation to a particular issue outweighed its potential prejudicial effect on the accused.

18. Cambodia and Oman reported that people who perpetrated acts of violence against women while under the wilful influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances were not exempt from criminal responsibility. Similarly, Germany reported that criminal liability would not be precluded when a perpetrator had acted under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

C. Police, prosecutors and other criminal justice officials

19. Most responding States reported that police officers and other representatives of criminal justice institutions (e.g. prosecutors) received training to sensitize them to gender and child-related issues and to build their capacity with regard to violence against women. Various countries reported that they promoted the use of specialized expertise in criminal justice agencies, and several reported that specific guidelines, standards and/or protocols had been drafted for criminal justice officials on issues related to violence against women.

20. Several States reported that they had created specialized units within their police services to deal with violence against women and victims of such crimes, and some respondents indicated that their national police departments took measures to prevent victims from secondary victimization by involving female officers in interviewing victims and gathering evidence. Mauritius, for example, reported that the Police Family Protection Unit had a special mandate to provide services to "vulnerable" victims, including women, that ongoing training was imparted to the personnel of the Unit so that they could deal with cases of domestic violence and that multi-agency response to victims, children and perpetrators was being promoted. It also reported that in 2009 a National Domestic Violence Committee, comprising senior officials from various ministries, departments and non-governmental organizations, had been set up to promote and adopt a coordinated approach to domestic violence and that Area Domestic Violence

⁴ "Battered woman syndrome" is suffered by women who, because of repeated violent acts by an intimate partner, may suffer depression and are unable to take any independent action that would allow them to escape the abuse, including refusing to press charges or to accept offers of support.

Committees had been established to ensure proper follow-up on all reported cases of domestic violence.

21. Most countries reported that they had established specialized units or personnel within the prosecution service, as well as specialized courts. Canada and the United Kingdom indicated that special domestic violence courts had been established, while Spain replied that it had courts for violence against women, as well as special prosecutor offices. In Mauritius and the Philippines, family courts had been created to provide a forum where families and children could resolve family legal matters. Sweden indicated that the Prosecution Authority worked towards the specialization of prosecutors for the fight against domestic violence. It further indicated that the Prosecution Authority had three prosecution development centres tasked with conducting methodological and legal development in different areas of crime and that one of the centres focused on domestic violence. In 2010, a project in Sweden evaluated the methods for working with domestic violence cases with a view to handling them more expeditiously and improving the collection of evidence. In Greece, two public prosecutors had been appointed to deal with trafficking in human beings, and Mexico reported that it had established a Special Prosecutor's Office for crimes of violence against women.

D. Sentencing and corrections

22. Several countries reported that their national laws took into account specific circumstances as aggravating factors for sentencing purposes. Some indicated that their penal code contained specific provisions that imposed a more severe scale of punishment on repeated punishable acts committed by men against women with whom they had, or had had, a close or intimate relationship. Cambodia reported that its penal code included provisions relating to violence committed by a spouse taking into account aggravating factors, including a person's position of trust or authority. Chile reported that it had recently adopted a law stipulating, in the context of violence against women, that the killing of a parent or a woman within a family would carry a more severe penalty.

23. Germany reported that perpetrators could be ordered to undergo treatment or therapy and that the monitoring of dangerous sexual and violent offenders by electronic means had been strengthened. Germany and Oman stated that the preventive detention of suspects in crimes of violence against women was possible, while Finland, the Philippines and Spain replied, regarding the rehabilitation of offenders, that educational or developmental programmes were offered to convicted perpetrators to facilitate their reintegration into society. Thailand reported that its law emphasized the elements of assistance and rehabilitation in cases of violence against women and that courts were able to impose rehabilitation, counselling, public service, probation or parole measures on the offender.

24. Some States reported that their national prison acts provided for special needs of women in prison and/or that special arrangements were made to meet those needs. Afghanistan reported that the Ministry of Women's Affairs was working on a policy to improve and protect the rights of imprisoned women; the Islamic Republic of Iran indicated that national courts were required, when possible, to seek alternatives to imprisonment for female offenders and that the Office on Protecting

Women and Children's Rights regularly visited prisons to assess the situation of female and juvenile prisoners.

E. Victim support and assistance, health and social services

25. Numerous States reported that they had put mechanisms in place to ensure that women subjected to violence had access to qualified personnel who could provide victims with legal and social support services. In particular, Sweden indicated that it had established "children's houses" where representatives of various institutions cooperated in the investigation of suspected crimes against children, and that minor girl victims were entitled to adequate legal representation to safeguard their rights in court proceedings. Germany reported that victim commissioners had been appointed in police stations, together with witness support units, and information and financial support was provided to crime victims. Oman indicated that in its national legislation there were provisions for supplying legal aid to persons without means, including victims of crime, while the United Kingdom stated that it had established a network of independent domestic violence and sexual violence advisers to provide support for victims of domestic violence and rape cases. In Thailand, a centre had been established to provide services to victims of domestic violence, including follow-up to temporary protective orders and coordination of case-settlements. Jamaica reported that it had established a victim support unit that also ensured witness protection and that the Centre for the Investigation of Sexual Offences and Child Abuse provided support for victims to ensure that they were treated fairly and humanely. The Islamic Republic of Iran reported that in 2004 the Department for Supporting the Rights of Women and Children had been created to, inter alia, provide legal assistance to sexually, physically and mentally abused women and children during and after court procedures.

26. Furthermore, various countries reported that victims of violence could receive reparations for harm caused as a result of such violence. In this regard, Sweden reported on the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority, which assessed State compensation, administered the Fund for Victims of Crime and acted as a centre of expertise. Several Member States reported that in cases where no perpetrator could be identified, or he or she could not pay damages, victims of crimes in general had the possibility of applying for State compensation. In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran reported that a draft Victim Support Bill was being studied in Parliament, the provisions of which included the establishment of a victim support fund. Germany indicated that surviving dependants of victims of violence who had died of their injuries could also claim compensation. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reported that access to fast and fair compensation remained a challenge, as national legislation allowed a victim to be compensated only for losses and tangible damages he or she had suffered, and that was deemed insufficient.

27. Finally, several States reported that specific support was available in courts to assist victims' participation during court proceedings and that for those who could not afford legal aid, those services were provided free of charge by the State. In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran reported that its draft criminal procedure code included an article on the need to provide the services of attorneys free of charge for incapacitated victims, if the court so decided.

28. In connection with assistance to foreign female victims of violence by their spouses, the Government of Japan indicated that it considered such violence a serious infringement of human rights and responded properly to foreign female nationals who were victims of such violence, ensuring their physical protection by coordinating with the agencies concerned and permitting applications for extension of the period of stay or for change of residence status by victims who were forced to be separated or divorced, or giving special permission for residence if they were overstaying or otherwise in violation of the Immigration Control Act on account of domestic violence.

29. Most responding States reported that they had established a network of accessible facilities and services for emergency and temporary accommodation and health services for victims of violence against women, including shelters, emergency housing and hotlines that provided round-the-clock crisis support. Mauritius indicated that female victims of domestic violence received, upon discharge from shelters, a one-time financial allowance, while Spain reported that victims could receive several entitlements related to their labour rights, including reduced working hours, and could receive economic assistance, including access to social housing. Mexico replied that the Attorney-General's Office took action to support victims, including the provision of legal assistance, access to shelters and social rehabilitation and health services, while Afghanistan reported that support centres for women had been established.

30. Several Member States elaborated on how they promoted collaboration and coordination among relevant agencies and services to better deal with the complexities and sensitivities of victims' cases. In particular, Canada reported that national inter-agency committees and councils promoted a multidisciplinary approach to domestic violence involving government officials, criminal justice officials, education, social services and health workers, as well as community organizations. In Jordan, centres for multiple services were available to victims of violence, including medical care. Cambodia reported that it was currently exploring the possibility of developing "one-stop service centres" to support victims in an integral manner. The Islamic Republic of Iran indicated that various government agencies cooperated to provide specialized social services to female victims, including visits made to care centres and safe houses to further explore the needs of victims. Finland and Thailand reported that specialized units had been created in hospitals to deal with victims of violence against women. Belarus reported that social reintegration and rehabilitation departments had been set up in 145 centres to provide assistance to victims of violence and 36 crisis shelters were available for women and children in need of social assistance because of their difficult home situations; in 2010 a total of 103 victims of domestic violence had sought refuge in such facilities.

F. Training

31. Most countries replied that specific training programmes and tools were offered to law enforcement and other relevant criminal justice officials to adequately identify and respond to the specific needs of women victims of violence. In addition, Finland highlighted that safety education material had been produced for professionals working with children, and Mauritius reported that training was

provided to representatives of religious bodies and other stakeholders to sensitize them on issues of domestic violence. Mauritius also indicated that training programmes on family welfare were being provided to teachers, government officials and civil society. The United Kingdom reported that training and guidance were given to specialized prosecutors on forced marriage and honour-based violence. Sweden reported that training material was produced with a focus on women with disabilities and women with problems of substance abuse or addiction who were exposed to violence. Egypt reported that communication training had been provided to media to ensure effective communications with regard to the issue. Ukraine provided information on its national training programmes on the prevention of violence against women in families and workplaces, which were intended to train a large number of people on non-violent solutions to problems, thus reducing cases of domestic violence. The Islamic Republic of Iran reported that training workshops to promote appropriate treatment of victims of violence, in particular women and children, were organized on a regular basis throughout the country for criminal justice officials and social workers.

G. Research and evaluation

32. Most countries reported that they had collected and analysed data on violence against women, including data disaggregated by form of violence, gender and in some cases the type of relationship between perpetrator and victim.

33. Cambodia reported that it was in the process of strengthening its mechanisms for the systematic collection of data on violence against women, and Estonia, Thailand and Sweden indicated that they carried out regular population-based surveys on violence against women as well as women's victimization surveys to analyse the causes, risk factors, levels of severity and impact of violence against women for different population groups. Canada reported that it collected data on crime and victimization of women, while Belgium reported that it had carried out qualitative and quantitative research on female genital mutilation. Qatar reported that it had conducted a methodological field study on family violence, which resulted in the drafting of an action plan, while Egypt indicated that it had published a national study on violence against women and that the findings were being addressed. In Estonia, research had been carried out regarding the causes of domestic violence, trafficking in women, victims' needs and gender equality. Germany reported that it had published studies on the health and safety of women and on violence against women in couple relationships. The Islamic Republic of Iran provided information on a study on violence against women currently being conducted, as well as on a research project that would study ways to support the rights of vulnerable groups exposed to delinquency.

34. With regard to evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system, the United Kingdom reported that the Crown Prosecution Service had introduced a "violence against women and girls validation measure", which had facilitated the monitoring of successful prosecutions, and that the Government had commissioned an independent review of the way rape complaints were handled by public authorities in England and Wales and of the efficiency of prosecutions. Spain reported that it had created a system of continued evaluation through the Government Office on Gender Violence, which collected, analysed and

disseminated data on violence against women. Finally, Mauritius provided information on a national action plan to combat domestic violence, which included a monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that it was effectively implemented.

H. Crime prevention measures

35. Most responding States reported that they had developed and implemented initiatives to prevent and combat violence against women involving a wide variety of strategies, action plans and task forces. Several countries provided details on their comprehensive action plans in the area of crime prevention, including activities aimed at awareness-raising, capacity-building for criminal justice officials, victim support, networking and cooperation between State institutions, civil society and sometimes the private sector.

36. Belarus indicated that special attention was paid to public information and prevention campaigns. In this regard, it mentioned that the Ministry of Internal Affairs posted an annual survey on its website (www.mvd.gov.by) providing information and analysis concerning the action taken to combat trafficking in persons and violent crime, together with a compilation of national and international legislation, statistical data and other relevant information. In order to raise public awareness of the measures undertaken to protect its citizens against unlawful acts, specialists at the major social services centres maintained information stands where the public could find the telephone numbers of relevant State authorities and social organizations offering assistance to persons with difficult home situations. It further indicated that information was also available to the public through leaflets, booklets and pamphlets on the subject of domestic violence, and events such as seminars, conferences, lectures and workshops were held to explore the issues involved. Finally, Belarus reported on national measures taken to reduce chronic alcoholism, as well as the initiative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to organize a preventive campaign entitled “Violence-free homes”, which was conducted nationwide in April 2011.

37. Belgium reported that its national action plan against violence between partners and other forms of domestic violence addressed the issues of forced marriages, honour crimes and female genital mutilation. The United Kingdom replied that it was in the process of developing new proposals to tackle cyberstalking. The Philippines reported that a national action plan had been designed to support and strengthen women’s role in peace processes and prevent violence and the violation of women’s rights in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. Malta and Mauritius reported that guidance and support were provided to adolescents who might be prone to becoming victims of exploitation and violence in general. Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Mauritius indicated that they provided support to married couples to help prevent or resolve conflicts. Belgium and Switzerland indicated that their citizens could discuss their problems with social workers in person, by telephone or by Internet.

38. Several States reported that they had launched advocacy and awareness campaigns on violence against women, including in schools and communities. Some countries reported that they had developed and disseminated knowledge of effective crime and violence prevention, targeting in particular women, children and youth.

Canada reported that it promoted public awareness on the risks and factors associated with family violence and had strengthened the capacity of criminal justice, housing and health systems to respond to violence. Jamaica indicated that the Ministry of National Security supported the efforts of non-governmental agencies in crime prevention measures regarding violence against women. NGOs such as Women's Media Watch (WMW), Women's Resource and Outreach Centre and Woman's Inc. had made considerable contributions to prevention of violence against women through outreach and educational programmes and initiatives. WMW, for instance, had partnered with the Bureau of Women's Affairs (BWA) and the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women to organize a national campaign designed to reduce gender-based violence in the country. Under the campaign, public education and awareness-raising projects had been implemented, as well as projects on gender and violence using the media and public forums. It had also published materials on gender-based violence for use in training programmes to explore the power dynamics underpinning gender relations and men's experiences of power and powerlessness. Furthermore, Jamaica indicated that BWA had established the Schools Education Programme, which sought to educate youth on measures to prevent gender-based and youth-based violence, and that in 2009, BWA had established a specific entity to coordinate several public education sessions on gender-based violence, targeting males between the ages of 14 and 24,.

39. Sweden reported that it had organized a public information campaign to increase the reporting of crimes and that it had established crime prevention centres in municipalities. Belgium reported that awareness campaigns had been organized, targeting both the general public and specific groups in society with information on legislation and support services. Ukraine indicated that changes were currently being made to child education policies in order to eliminate, starting in early childhood, any kind of discrimination against women and to educate children in a spirit of equality between girls and boys. Reference was made to the role played by media and to the recognition that it was vital to stop gender stereotyping and the portrayal of women as objects of use, as well as to strengthen the role of women in society. Both Belgium and Finland reported that they gave special attention to immigrant women who experienced violence. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, brochures were being prepared on ways to protect female victims and on violence against women in general. Mexico provided information on an awareness-raising initiative with regard to its strategy for the prevention of trafficking in human beings and gender violence among indigenous women. In the context of women working overseas, the Philippines reported that it undertook activities aimed at raising awareness of issues related to migration, marriage, illegal recruitment, documentation fraud and trafficking in persons.

40. Most replying States reported that they actively promoted gender equality as a key component of preventing violence against women. In this regard, Estonia reported that its Advertising Act, in force since 2008, stated that advertising should not incite violent behaviour or express denigration or discrimination on the grounds of nationality, race, age, colour, sex, language, origin, religion, political or other opinion, financial or social status or other circumstance. Spain and Sweden indicated that they had put in place measures to ensure that educational material was gender-sensitive.

41. Finally, some States reported that they provided rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators of violence against women, including community-based rehabilitation programmes.

I. International cooperation

42. Most respondents reported that they had signed or ratified relevant treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol thereto, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol thereto on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

43. Some countries reported on their cooperation with other States, including within the framework of international organizations, to exchange information concerning successful intervention models and preventive programmes on eliminating all forms of violence against women. Cambodia reported that it had signed a memorandum of understanding with countries in the region (China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) to prevent human trafficking and assist victims of that crime. Greece indicated that it had ratified an agreement for the protection and support of minors who were victims of trafficking between Albania and Greece. Estonia indicated that it had implemented two international projects focusing on assisting sexually exploited women, including a cooperation project with Sweden to improve the processing of cases of trafficking in human beings. Belgium reported that the remit of its national action plan to combat domestic violence was not limited to activities in the country but also extended to the area of development cooperation.

44. Finally, several Member States reported on their relevant engagement within the framework of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

III. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime activities to prevent and respond to violence against women

45. During recent years, within UNODC there has been a programmatic increase in the broad area of strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice system responses to violence against women.

46. The largest portfolio of programmes addressing violence against women is in the Southern African region, particularly in South Africa, where several activities are ongoing, including the establishment of a fourth "one-stop centre", building upon the success of the three previous centres, which have all been handed over to local governments, and the implementation of a victim empowerment programme. In Southern Africa, the UNODC Regional Office, in partnership with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) secretariat and the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO), is implementing a

regional project aimed at enhancing the capacity of law enforcement officials in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, as well as the whole Southern African region, to respond effectively to violence against women. The project is based primarily on the UNODC *Handbook on Effective Police Responses to Violence against Women* and its accompanying *Training Curriculum on Effective Police Responses to Violence against Women*.

47. Key activities implemented under the project to date include: (a) development of regional and national training modules; (b) hosting and facilitation, together with the SADC and SARPCCO secretariats, of a six-day regional train-the-trainer training workshop attended by law enforcement officers from Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, as well as officials from SADC and SARPCCO; (c) hosting and facilitation, together with the SADC and SARPCCO secretariats and in partnership with the police services of Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, of five-day national training workshops in each of those countries, during which a total of 138 law enforcement officers were trained; (d) the development and publication of contextualized national pocketbook versions of the training material for each of the countries covered by the project;⁵ and (e) the development of relevant advocacy material.

48. Future activities to be undertaken will include the reprinting and further distribution of the UNODC *Handbook* and *Training Curriculum*; the printing and distribution in Portuguese of those tools; the hosting and facilitation of a one-day national awareness-raising event in each of the beneficiary States to provide a platform for law enforcement, non-governmental organizations, civil society, faith-based organizations, the public and media to discuss the development of effective law enforcement responses; the hosting of a regional expert group meeting to discuss project outcomes and to provide key findings and recommendations aimed at strengthening a regional response to the development of effective law enforcement responses in Southern Africa; and the possible extension and replication of the project and its training programme in the remaining SADC member States.⁶

49. In Kenya, UNODC, as part of its activities related to the implementation of the regional programme, is currently assisting the government in developing a strategy to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence and has developed a training manual for prosecutors on addressing such violence.

50. In Latin America, the Regional Office for Brazil and the Southern Cone developed a project for the strengthening of public and civil society institutions to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. The project seeks to improve the countries' capacity to offer support to victims of gender-based violence. To that end, it directs efforts towards increasing the level of knowledge and awareness among relevant government employees and civil society on questions related to violence against women. Moreover, it seeks to develop regional knowledge and expertise on this problem and

⁵ Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

⁶ Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

to build a good-practices network, gathering players from the community, civil society and governmental institutions.

51. In the framework of that project, a study in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay has been undertaken and a regional report on the responses to gender-based violence has been produced and is now available in both Spanish and Portuguese. In Paraguay in July 2011, UNODC, in cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), held an International Conference on the theme “Answers to gender-based violence in the Southern Cone: progress, challenges and regional experiences”. The Conference was aimed at presenting and debating the above-mentioned report and promoting the exchange of experiences, stimulating cooperation and facilitating the creation of a network for the exchange of good practices between community leaders, civil society and government institutions. The Conference served as an effective means of promoting awareness of violence against women among the media in the region. The event enjoyed wide media coverage, with over 50 major newspapers attending and the publication of related material on several Internet websites and blogs.

52. Further achievements in the region in the area of preventing and responding to violence against women included a guide to integrated assistance relating to gender violence, developed in Chile in partnership with the Centre for Citizen Security Studies, University of Chile; the development in Uruguay of training activities for police forces on how to deal with violence against women; and the launch in Brazil of standards for specialized police stations attending to women.

53. In Afghanistan, UNODC activities are focused on the social integration of women released from prison who are vulnerable to violence. In Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif, the Office, in partnership with the Government of Afghanistan and the non-governmental organization Women for Afghan Women (WAW), helps to run two post-release transition houses for women leaving prison. Each House of Hope, as they are called, can accommodate between 20 and 25 women and children and offer instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic; life skills classes (such as money management, parenting, women’s rights in Islam and Afghan law); vocational training; and job placement assistance. Former inmates also have access to drug addiction treatment; individual and group counselling; basic health care; family counselling; and mediation. The houses also facilitate reintegration into the family and the community.

54. In Viet Nam, since 2008, the Office, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Justice, has been implementing the project “Strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and justice sector officers to respond to domestic violence”, with a focus on female victims. Major achievements under the project include progress in training, advocacy, data and analysis. Over 800 local police officers, judges, prosecutors and members of the Vietnamese Women’s Union were trained in four provinces. The content was based on training materials jointly developed by UNODC, the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Justice. In the area of advocacy, a 10-episode television series called *Breaking the Silence* was broadcast twice on national television. The series raised awareness about the unacceptability of domestic violence, the different forms of violence and the role of the law enforcement sector in protecting victims and holding abusers accountable. The awareness-raising campaign also included a

writing competition called “Say no to domestic violence”; prizes were awarded and the best of over 1,500 awareness-raising stories on domestic violence were published. A report based on surveys of law enforcement practices and legal support available to victims of domestic violence was published, presenting information on what kind of action the police undertook when an incident of domestic violence was reported, how they treated the victims and what the result of the police intervention was. It is expected that the findings of the surveys will play a crucial role in identifying existing gaps in Viet Nam’s response to domestic violence and determining future activities and initiatives to address those gaps. Ongoing activities under the project include supporting the National Legal Aid Agency in training provincial and local officers to provide better assistance to victims of domestic violence. In early 2012, the project will also collaborate with the National Police Academy to include modules on domestic violence prevention in its training curriculum to ensure long-term capacity-building on the issue.

55. During the period under review, UNODC continued to cooperate and coordinate with relevant United Nations agencies to prevent and respond to violence against women. The Office is part of the United Nations inter-agency initiative Stop Rape Now: United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, which is aimed at improving the quality of programming of the different United Nations entities forming part of the initiative to address sexual violence, increasing the coordination of efforts for comprehensive prevention and response services and improving accountability. That inter-agency initiative was also designed to highlight and create awareness of abuses and, ultimately, to end sexual violence and make the world safer for women and girls. Through its participation in the initiative, UNODC contributes to the implementation of the various mechanisms to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict established by Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010), on women, peace and security, and in particular the Team of Experts on Rule of Law and Sexual Violence established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1888 (2009). Within the framework of the inter-agency initiative, the Office is also cooperating with the World Health Organization in the development of a joint project to address key gaps in policies and practices related to the collection and use of forensic evidence of sexual violence in conflict-affected settings.

56. In December 2011, UNODC participated in the evaluation workshop organized and conducted by the Police Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the standardized training curriculum for United Nations Police on investigating and preventing sexual and gender-based violence in post-conflict societies. The workshop, which brought together the United Nations Police Division design team, curriculum design experts, training course instructors and selected trainees from the regional pilot courses completed in Germany, the Philippines and Rwanda in 2011, was aimed at finalizing the content of the curriculum with a view to its adoption and certification by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Finally, UNODC contributes, on a regular basis, inputs and information to the inventory run by UN-Women of United Nations system activities to prevent and eliminate violence against women.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

57. The analysis of the replies provided by 29 Member States highlights that preventing and responding to violence against women continues to be an issue of importance and relevance for many countries. The information provided indicates that in most responding countries, to different degrees and in different ways, legislation is in place to respond to violence against women, that specific training is provided to criminal justice officials and other relevant officials (i.e. health officials and social workers), that support service mechanisms are in place for victims of violence against women, that research on and evaluation of data related to violence against women are undertaken and that comprehensive policies and strategies have been developed to prevent this phenomenon.

58. As relates to the work of UNODC, the Office has continued to expand its programme for strengthening criminal justice system responses to gender-based violence. Efforts have been made to maintain and strengthen effective partnerships with other relevant organizations, particularly with other United Nations entities active in this field. It should be noted, however, that there is a need for the Office to continue to expand this work, including in the context of overall United Nations efforts, particularly in the light of the approval by the General Assembly, in December 2010, of the updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

59. Considering the responses received from Member States and the work undertaken by UNODC, and with a view to better supporting the measures that Member States and the Office are taking to prevent and respond to violence against women, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice may wish to encourage and invite Member States to:

(a) Design and support programmes to empower women, both politically and economically, in order to assist in preventing violence against women, in particular through their participation in decision-making processes;

(b) Advance effective crime prevention and criminal justice strategies that address violence against women and continue evaluating and reviewing their legislation and legal principles, procedures, policies, programmes and practices relating to crime prevention and criminal justice matters, in a manner consistent with their legal systems and drawing upon the updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice;

(c) Provide appropriate assistance to women victims of violence, including by ensuring that those women have access to adequate legal representation where appropriate; and to establish a multidisciplinary, coordinated response to sexual assault that includes specially trained police, prosecutors, judges, forensic examiners and victim support services;

(d) Set up and strengthen mechanisms for the systematic collection of data on violence against women with a view to assessing the scope and prevalence of such violence and to guiding the design, implementation and funding of effective crime prevention and criminal justice responses;

(e) Support the work of UNODC in providing crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women and consider requesting UNODC policy, legal and technical assistance when embarking on national efforts in this area;

(f) Provide appropriate extrabudgetary resources to UNODC for continuing the development and implementation of field-based projects and programmes in the area of violence against women and girls, within the mandate and the area of comparative advantage of UNODC;

(g) Ensure the widest possible dissemination in their local languages of the updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

60. The Commission may further wish to consider recommending that UNODC:

(a) Continue supporting national efforts to promote the empowerment of women and gender equality in order to enhance national efforts to eliminate violence against women, including by strengthening throughout its programme of work its crime prevention and criminal justice efforts in response to violence against women;

(b) Continue adopting a comprehensive and integrated approach to assisting requested countries in preventing and responding to violence against women, and to continue developing tools and handbooks in this area;

(c) Continue offering, in cooperation with Member States and the institutes of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network, training and capacity-building opportunities, in particular for practitioners working in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice and providers of support services to victims of violence against women, and make available and disseminate information on successful intervention models, preventive programmes and other practices;

(d) Continue and — where necessary — strengthen its coordination of activities in the area of violence against women with relevant entities of the United Nations system, as well as other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

(e) Intensify its efforts to ensure the widest possible use and dissemination of the updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures, including through the development or revision of relevant tools, such as handbooks, training manuals, programmes and modules, including online capacity-building modules.