



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
6 December 2013  
English  
Original: Spanish

---

### Commission on the Status of Women

#### Fifty-eighth session

10-21 March 2014

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women  
and to the special session of the General Assembly  
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development  
and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of  
strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern  
and further actions and initiatives**

### **Statement submitted by Dianova International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution [1996/31](#).



## Statement

Gender-based violence is a social phenomenon that always entails a violation of the human rights of women and girls who are its victims. It is a phenomenon that involves us all, even though we rarely feel ourselves part of it because it takes place within the private sphere and, in most cases, is confined to that space. Women and children who suffer from gender violence may be slow to report it, if they do so at all, as the legal system in Chile is bureaucratic and not very efficient in protecting them. The few reported cases of violence against women, femicide and child abuse demonstrate and confirm that women and girls are most vulnerable and are most exposed to violence.

In Chile, it is psychological violence that is most prevalent. This consists of insulting a woman or making her feel uneasy with herself, denigrating her or humiliating her in front of other people, acting in a way so as to frighten or intimidate her, threatening to harm her, her children or some other person important to her. Because it leaves no physical evidence, it remains invisible, thus permitting women to downplay the phenomenon, to blame themselves and to justify the behaviour, often for many years, a key factor that helps to cover up violence.

According to data from the National Women's Service [Servicio Nacional de la Mujer], 5 out of every 10 women in the metropolitan area are victims of this type of aggression. When it comes to children, according to figures from the latest study by the United Nations Children's Fund in our country, 7 out of 10 boys and girls suffer some type of violence at the hands of their mother or father, 5 out of 10 suffer some type of physical abuse, and 4 out of 10 suffer severe physical violence; in the case of sexual violence, 7 out of every 10 juveniles who have suffered abuse are girls.

Abuse affects boys, girls and adolescents across all social strata. Among the primary risk factors associated with violence are physical aggression between parents and excessive consumption of alcohol in the home. It is important, then, to address these aspects at an early stage.

Taking into account the data presented, we stress the importance of treating the problem of violence not exclusively from the woman's viewpoint, but also within the context of the couple and from the couple toward the children, with priority to restoring women's self-esteem, improving emotional bonds with the children, and achieving personal empowerment.

As the woman's principal motivation is her need to create a basic feeling of connection with other people, and as the notion of self and of self-worth is based on this connection, we believe that the phenomenon of violence goes beyond the individual and has to do with relationships, and that in seeking to overcome trauma we must never separate the victims from the other persons who are important to them (children, spouses, relatives, neighbours, friends). On the contrary, we must include them in the circle of support, as long as this does not mean exposing them to further aggression.

Policies have gradually been adopted for intervening with abusive men, recognizing that women will often act ambivalently towards them, reporting the abuse while at the same time protecting the abuser. One of the risk factors associated with violence against women in Chile is the abuse of alcohol and drugs,

and we also consider this problem to be a central issue in addressing the phenomenon.

In short, our perspective on violence against women and girls in Chile is comprehensive, multidimensional and closely linked to human rights and the rights of the child. We are struggling to make visible the pain that lies behind abuse and violence in all its forms in order to help redress it and in this way to move toward a fairer and more inclusive society.

---