CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE SIDE EVENT ON
ADVANCING RESEARCH FOR POLICY FORMULATION in EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA


Type: Panel

Participants: 300

Venue: Conference room 1, Conference Building

Date: Tuesday, 13 March 2018, 08:15-9:30

I. Background and Rationale

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world that threatens the security and safety of countless women. It remains widespread across the globe and is a major obstacle to achieving gender equality. Global data has shown that one in three women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in her lifetime. Where domestic violence impacts women it often also has negative outcomes for children who are witnesses, or themselves survivors of violence against children (VAC). Research has shown that co-occurrence of violence against women and violence against children can result in long-term negative effects. The magnitude of VAWG has significant short and long-term consequences on the physical and psychological well-being, health and safety of women and girls. Taking many forms, from psychological to sexual violence, it constitutes discrimination, preventing women and girls’ full and equal participation in society. Violence against women reduces educational achievement, economic and public participation and productivity of women and has lasting effects on children, other family

1 Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “The World’s Women 2015”,

members, and whole communities. If unaddressed, these human rights violations have serious negative consequences for societies.

It is difficult to get reliable data on the exact prevalence rates and types of violence experienced by women and girls. Administrative data, which is collected by different authorities and institutions, such as the police or health care centers, often do not show the true extent of violence against women, as in the majority of the cases women do not report their experiences. Underreporting can increase even further in times of armed conflict and political unrest.

Surveys have proven to be an important tool to show a truer picture of the extent of VAWG. Methodologically sound research and robust data collection, which covers various aspects of the VAWG, is of utmost importance to be able to monitor change over time as well as identify progress achieved and gaps, which persist. While it is never possible to capture the full picture of VAWG, because of the taboo nature of the topic, surveys that are carried out with care and sound preparation are the best option available to get better insight into the real situation of women and girls.

Data, which is disaggregated by different categories, such as income, education, ethnicity (including indigenous status), disability status, geographic location, frequency of violence, should be at the heart of evidence-based policy making. It can show where improvement has been achieved, but more importantly, point out areas in which more work needs to be done and additional measures need to be taken. Evidence-based policy advocacy supports key decision makers to make well-informed decisions on different levels when it comes to the development and implementation of policies, programmes and projects. By using high quality data and evidence from research as the ultimate guidance for the development and implementation of policies, more sustainable solutions can be found, and much needed change achieved.

Data are necessary to formulate policy action and monitor implementation within the framework of the 2030 Development Agenda as “Prevalence data are required to measure the magnitude of the problem; understand the various types of violence and their consequences; identify groups at high risk and their particular conditions; explore the barriers to seeking help; and ensure that the appropriate responses are being provided. These data are the starting point for informing laws, policies, and developing effective responses and programmes, as needed. They also allow countries to monitor change over time and assess the effectiveness of their interventions.”

II. Objectives of the side-event:

The high-level side event will serve to present two major studies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and to share good practices of policy formulation based on research data:

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The Regional Survey on the Well-being and Safety of Women in South-Eastern Europe and Eastern Europe, which is implemented by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), in Moldova, Ukraine, Albania, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia & Herzegovina.

The background of the study which will be conducted during 2018, overview and the benefit for policy formulation of comparable and cross-country data collection will be presented at the event. While the Study focuses mainly on the well-being and safety of women using tested methodology from the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, it also includes a conflict dimension in order to examine the prevalence and manifestations of violence against women and girls in conflict and deepen understandings of the connection between conflict and violence against women and girls. The survey is based on the definitions used in the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (“Istanbul Convention”). The survey is financed by up to 80% by the EU’s Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) with additional contributions from member states, UNFPA and UN Women.

Making the connection between intimate partner violence and violence against children in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, which was jointly implemented through desk review methodology by UNFPA and UNICEF in Albania, Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Turkey and Ukraine.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and violence against children (VAC) are two global pandemics with devastating consequences for individuals as well as the development and wellbeing of society. Globally, intimate partner violence (IPV) is the most common form of violence experienced by women. Although progress has been made to address both IPV and VAC in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, levels of both VAC and IPV remain high across the region. Work to address IPV or VAC often occurs separately, or in silos, while global evidence demonstrates overlaps in the causes, consequences and co-occurrence of both types of violence. The Research is an example of an interagency advocacy effort based on synthesized evidence on the intersections between VAWG and VAC to demonstrate a direct link between the data generated and eliminating drivers and risk factors common to both violence against children and intimate partner violence. Reducing current prevalence of IPV will reduce the odds of violence for later generations.

Sharing good practices from countries, research and policy development institutions to support better informed and evidence-based decision-making by policy makers and other key stakeholders working to combat VAWG and achieve gender equality

The side event will serve to discuss good practices from countries in developing polices based on research data and evidence as well as to address the importance of evidence-based policy actions that need to be taken as a step towards preventing and combating
violence against women and achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. Research data feeds into policy formulation and programming that is multi-sectoral and survivor centered, linking the capacities of governmental social services, health, education and safety/justice actors as well as non-governmental services in a web of prevention and response. Policy, legal and administrative reform that responds to the findings of survey-based analysis and recommendations can provide a bedrock for adequate allocations of resources as well as the necessary legislative and social frameworks to protect women and children.

III. Programme and format

The 1.15-hour session will consist of brief presentations by invited panelists, followed by a question and answer session.

**Moderator:**
Mr. Luis Mora, Head of Gender, Human Rights and Culture Branch, UNFPA HQ

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