**Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences**

**CSW Side event: Fighting violence against women in politics**

Convened by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences (SRVAW), the Permanent Mission of Switzerland, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia, and the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Belgium to the United Nations in New York, with the Support of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations in New York

New York, Tuesday 13 March 2018

1:15pm - 2:30 pm, Conference Room D

**Concept Note**

**Background information**

While women’s political participation is progressing globally, women still remain underrepresented in all level of political decision making. Despite representing almost half of the population, it is estimated that the percentage of women in parliament still stands on average at 23 per cent worldwide. Too often, women are left without a voice in political processes and ignored as an electorate. Women in politics are a primary target of gender-based violence because they are women. The phenomenon of violence against women in politics (VAWP) is gaining growing visibility and concern around the globe. It undermines gender equality and the foundations of democracy. Reports of physical attacks, harassment and intimidation against female politicians, activists, and voters grew since women have become more politically involved. Often underestimated and dismissed as the “cost of doing politics,” such acts pose at serious risk women’s global involvement in decision making as full political actors.

VAWP represents a major barrier to women’s participation in political activities and to the full enjoyment of women’s human rights both in the public and private spheres. This is despite that fact that women’s rights to live a life free from violence and participate in political and public office are fully enshrined in international human rights law (UN General Assembly resolution 66/130), which outlines States’ obligations in addressing this issue, and calls for an environment of zero tolerance against VAWP. Furthermore, the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in 2015 (A/RES/70/1) provides for further commitment by states and stakeholders to address and combat gender discrimination and violence against women, and to ensure women can fully realize their civil and political rights. In particular, SDG 5, is dedicated to achieve gender equality and to the empowerment of all women and girls, while SDG 16 aimed at promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences, Dr Dubravka Šimonović, included the issue of VAWP among the thematic priorities of her mandate. Within her tenure, the Special Rapporteur also intends to tackle VAWP through strengthened cooperation and synergies between her mandate and other UN agencies, international organizations and global and regional mechanisms on women’s rights. In order to prevent violence against women in politics and to protect women all over the world from violence, guidelines and coordinated efforts are needed to promptly address this global pandemic. To that end, the Special Rapporteur intends to analyze the issue of ending VAWP in her upcoming thematic report to the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly, in September 2018.

1 [https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/infographics/2017-03/women-in-politics-2017](https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/infographics/2017-03/women-in-politics-2017);
CSW side event

Collective work to eliminate VAWP must become a global matter of priority. Building on their ongoing collaboration on the subject and on their expressed commitment to address the issue, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations in New York, and UN Women, in collaboration with regional mechanisms’ on women’s rights, are convening a side event on ending VAWP, with a view to raising awareness and discussing current challenges and priority actions to be taken to end this pandemic. The side event will bring together experts, Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

Expected outputs

This side-event will contribute to analyzing issues that are critical for ending VAWP and ensuring that women fully realize their civil and political rights. In particular, the side event is aimed at:

- Sharing information on the current manifestations of VAWP, highlighting its causes and consequences;
- Identifying shortcomings and good practices in legal and policy framework designed to end VAWP at the national, regional and international levels;
- Elaborating recommendations for mitigating and responding to VAWP, also in view of the upcoming General Assembly report of the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

Panellists

Moderator

- Ms Dubravka Šimonović, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences

Opening remarks

- His Excellency Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations in New York
- Ms Helena Štimac Radin, Director, Croatian Governmental Office for Gender Equality

Panellists

- Ms Purna Sen, Director Policy Division, UN-Women
- Ms Dalia Leinairte, Chair, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Ms Feride Acar, President, Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of the Council of Europe (GREVIO)
- Ms Sylvia Mesa Peluffo, President, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI)
- Ms Soyata Maiga, Chairperson, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)
- Ms Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Women of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (OAS - IACHR)
- Ms Melissa Upreti, Member of the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice (WGDAW)

Closing remarks

- Ms Sylvie Durrer, Director, Swiss Federal Office for Gender Equality
- Ms Dubravka Šimonović, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences