



OFFICE OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS  
HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

# “16 days of activism against gender violence” 25 November to 10 December 2005

## Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women

Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993 (Preamble...)

### Article 1

For the purposes of this Declaration, the term “violence against women” means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

### Article 2

Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

- Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
- Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
- Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

### Article 3

Women are entitled to the equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. These rights include, inter alia:

- The right to life;
- The right to equality;
- The right to liberty and security of person;
- The right to equal protection under the law;
- The right to be free from all forms of discrimination;
- The right to the highest standard attainable of physical and mental health;
- The right to just and favourable conditions of work;
- The right not to be subjected to torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

### Article 4

States should condemn violence against women and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination. States should pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence against women and, to this end, should:

- Consider, where they have not yet done so, ratifying or acceding to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or withdrawing reservations to that Convention;
- Refrain from engaging in violence against women;
- Exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons;
- Develop penal, civil, labour and administrative sanctions in domestic legislation to punish and redress the wrongs caused to women who are subjected to violence; women who are subjected to violence should be provided with access to the mechanisms of justice and, as provided for by national legislation, to just and effective remedies for the harm that they have suffered; States should also inform women of their rights in seeking redress through such mechanisms;
- Consider the possibility of developing national plans of action to promote the protection of women against any form of violence, or to include provisions for that purpose in plans already existing, taking into account, as appropriate, such cooperation as can be provided by non-governmental organizations, particularly those concerned with the issue of violence against women;
- Develop, in a comprehensive way, preventive approaches and all those measures of a legal, political, administrative and cultural nature that promote the protection of women against any form of violence, and ensure that the re-victimization of women does not occur because of laws insensitive to gender considerations, enforcement practices or other interventions;

- Work to ensure, to the maximum extent feasible in the light of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation, that women subjected to violence and, where appropriate, their children have specialized assistance, such as rehabilitation, assistance in child care and maintenance, treatment, counselling, and health and social services, facilities and programmes, as well as support structures, and should take all other appropriate measures to promote their safety and physical and psychological rehabilitation;
- Include in government budgets adequate resources for their activities related to the elimination of violence against women;
- Take measures to ensure that law enforcement officers and public officials responsible for implementing policies to prevent, investigate and punish violence against women receive training to sensitize them to the needs of women;
- Adopt all appropriate measures, especially in the field of education, to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women and to eliminate prejudices, customary practices and all other practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes and on stereotyped roles for men and women;
- Promote research, collect data and compile statistics, especially concerning domestic violence, relating to the prevalence of different forms of violence against women and encourage research on the causes, nature, seriousness and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of measures implemented to prevent and redress violence against women; those statistics and findings of the research will be made public;
- Adopt measures directed towards the elimination of violence against women who are especially vulnerable to violence;
- Include, in submitting reports as required under relevant human rights instruments of the United Nations, information pertaining to the violence against women and measures taken to implement the present Declaration;
- Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines to assist in the implementation of the principles set forth in the present Declaration;
- Recognize the important role of the women's movement and non-governmental organizations world wide in raising awareness and alleviating the problem of violence against women;
- Facilitate and enhance the work of the women's movement and non-governmental organizations and cooperate with them at local, national and regional levels;
- Encourage intergovernmental regional organizations of which they are members to include the elimination of violence against women in their programmes, as appropriate.

### Article 5

The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system should, within their respective fields of competence, contribute to the recognition and realization of the rights and the principles set forth in the present Declaration and, to this end, should, inter alia:

- Foster international and regional cooperation with a view to defining regional strategies for combating violence, exchanging experiences and financing programmes relating to the elimination of violence against women;
- Promote meetings and seminars with the aim of creating and raising awareness among all persons of the issue of the elimination of violence against women;
- Foster coordination and exchange within the United Nations system between human rights treaty bodies to address the issue of violence against women effectively;
- Include in analyses prepared by organizations and bodies of the United Nations system of social trends and problems, such as the periodic reports on the world social situation, examination of trends in violence against women;
- Encourage coordination between organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to incorporate the issue of violence against women into ongoing programmes, especially with reference to groups of women particularly vulnerable to violence;
- Promote the formulation of guidelines or manuals relating to violence against women, taking into account the measures referred to in the present Declaration;
- Consider the issue of the elimination of violence against women, as appropriate, in fulfilling their mandates with respect to the implementation of human rights instruments;
- Cooperate with non-governmental organizations in addressing the issue of violence against women.

### Article 6

Nothing in the present Declaration shall affect any provision that is more conducive to the elimination of violence against women that may be contained in the legislation of a State or in any international convention, treaty or other instrument in force in a State.