Congressional Research Service
Informing the legislative debate since 1914

United Nations System Efforts to Address Violence Against Women

Updated July 12, 2011

Congressional Research Service
https://crsreports.congress.gov
RL34518

CRS REPORT
Prepared for Members and
Committees of Congress

Summary

The United Nations (U.N.) system supports a number of programs that address international violence against women (VAW). These activities, which are implemented by 36 U.N. entities, range from large-scale interagency initiatives to smaller grants and programs that are implemented by a range of partners, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national governments, and individual U.N. agencies. U.N. member states, including the United States, address VAW by ratifying multilateral treaties, adopting resolutions and decisions, and supporting U.N. mechanisms and bodies that focus on the issue.

Many U.N. activities and mechanisms address VAW directly, while others focus on it in the context of broader issues such as humanitarian assistance, U.N. peacekeeping, and global health. U.N. entities do not specifically track the cost of programs or activities with anti-VAW components. As a result, it is unclear how much the U.N. system, including individual U.N. agencies, funds, and programs, spends annually on programs to combat violence against women.

The U.S. government supports many activities that, either in whole or in part, work to combat international violence against women. Some experts argue that when considering the most effective ways to address VAW on an international scale, the United States should take into account the efforts of international organizations such as the United Nations. Were the 112th Congress to decide to use U.N. mechanisms to combat VAW, a number of programs and options might be considered. Congress has appropriated funds to the U.N. Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women, for example, as well as to U.N. agencies, funds, and programs that address types or circumstances of violence against women and girls. These include the U.N. Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), World Health Organization (WHO), U.N. Development Program (UNDP), U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Senate has also provided its advice and consent to U.S. ratification of treaties that address international violence against women and girls—including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

At the same time, however, some policymakers contend that U.N. anti-VAW activities may not always align with U.S. foreign assistance priorities. They emphasize that rather than focusing on multilateral efforts, the U.S. government should focus on its own anti-VAW activities. Additionally, others may suggest that the U.S. government reconsider its efforts to combat international VAW in light of the global economic crisis, economic recession, and consequent calls to lower the U.S. budget deficit.

This report provides an overview of recent U.N. efforts to address VAW and highlights key U.N. interagency efforts. It also discusses selected U.N. funds, programs, and agencies that address international violence against women. It does not assess the extent to which VAW is directly addressed or is part of a larger initiative or program.

For information on international violence against women, including its causes, consequences, and U.S. policy, see CRS Report RL34438, *International Violence Against Women: U.S. Response and Policy Issues.*

This report will be updated as events warrant.

Contents

Introduction 1
Issues for Congress 2
Priorities and Resource Allocation 2
Funding U.N. Anti-VAW Efforts 2
United States Anti-VAW Activities in U.N. Fora 3
Possible Role of the Newly Established U.N. Agency for Women (UN Women) 3
U.N. Definition of Violence Against Women 4
U.N. Secretary-General-led Initiatives 5
U.N. Study on Violence Against Women 5
UNITE to End Violence Against Women Campaign 6
Selected U.N. System Interagency Activities 6
The U.N. Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women 6
Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) Task Force on Violence Against Women 8
Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) 8
U.N. Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (U.N. Action) 8
Selected U.N. Conferences, Agreements, and Resolutions 9
U.N. World Conferences on Women 9
U.N. Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 9
U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 10
Trafficking in Persons Protocol 10
U.N. Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security 10
Selected U.N. Funds, Commissions, Departments, and Specialized Agencies 12
Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 12
Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) 12
U.N. Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) 13
U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) 13
World Health Organization (WHO) 14
U.N. Development Program (UNDP) 14
U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) 15
U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 15
U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) 15
U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA) 16
U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 16
International Labor Organization (ILO) 16
Joint U.N. Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) 16

Tables

Table 1. U.S. Contributions to the U.N. Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women, FY2005—FY2012 7

Contacts

Author Information..... 17

Introduction

Since the late 1990s, the United Nations (U.N.) organization has increasingly recognized violence against women (hereinafter VAW) as a global health concern and violation of human rights. Ongoing U.N. system efforts to address VAW range from large-scale interagency initiatives to smaller grants and programs implemented by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national governments, and individual U.N. agencies. A number of U.N. system activities address VAW directly; however, many are also implemented in the context of broader issues such as humanitarian aid, peacekeeping, global health, and human rights. Most U.N. entities do not specifically track the cost of programs or activities with anti-VAW components. Therefore, it is unclear how much the U.N. system, including individual U.N. agencies and programs, spends annually on programs to combat violence against women.

U.N. member states collectively address VAW through the work of U.N. principal organs such as the General Assembly, Security Council, and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Members of these bodies have adopted resolutions and decisions addressing VAW in general, and more specifically violence against women migrant workers; honor crimes against women and girls; trafficking in women and girls; sexual violence in conflict; VAW prevention; and women, peace, and security.[1] Many U.N. member states have also ratified international treaties that address violence against women, including the U.N. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In addition, members of the U.N. Human Rights Council support the work of the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences. U.N. member states also make voluntary contributions to U.N. funds and other mechanisms that address violence against women.

Since 2005, at the direction of U.N. member states, former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and current Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon have worked to coordinate and enhance anti-VAW activities among various U.N. entities. In late 2005, for example, as part of then-Secretary-General Annan's *In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence Against Women*, the U.N. Secretariat's then-Division for the Advancement of Women (which is now part of the U.N. Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, referred to as "UN Women") compiled an inventory of U.N. system activities that address violence against women. The inventory, which was last updated in February 2011, identifies 36 U.N. entities that work to combat VAW on a global, national, or local level.[2] In February 2008, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched a U.N. system-wide public awareness campaign to end violence against women.

---

[1] See, for example, (1) U.N. General Assembly resolution 61/143, *Intensification of Efforts to Eliminate all Forms of Violence Against Women*, December 19, 2006; (2) U.N. General Assembly resolution 60/139, *Violence Against Women Migrant Workers*, December 16, 2005; (3) U.N. General Assembly resolution 60/139,*Working Towards the Elimination of Crimes Against Women and Girls Committed in the Name of Honour*, December 20, 2004; (4) U.N. General Assembly resolution 59/166, *Trafficking in Women and Girls*, December 20, 2004; (5) U.N. General Assembly resolution 62/134, *Eliminating Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence*, December 18, 2007; and (6) U.N. ECOSOC Resolution 2006/29, *Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses to Violence Against Women and Girl*s, July 22, 2006; and (7) U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on *Women, Peace, and Security*, October 31, 2000.

[2] The largest of these include the U.N. Development Program (UNDP), the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA), the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Women, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). See *Preventing and Eliminating Violence Against Women: An Inventory of United Nations System Activities On Violence Against Women*, updated February 2011, available at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/inventory/Inventory-Feb-2011.pdf.

This report provides examples of recent U.N. system efforts to address VAW, including the Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women, anti-VAW initiatives of past and current U.N. Secretaries-General, and interagency activities. It also discusses selected U.N. agreements, mechanisms, agencies, funds, and programs that—either in whole or in part—work to eliminate violence against women. It does not assess the scope of U.N. anti-VAW activities or evaluate a U.N. entity's progress in achieving its goal. This report supplements CRS Report RL34438, *International Violence Against Women: U.S. Response and Policy Issues*.

Issues for Congress

When considering U.S. efforts to address violence against women internationally, Members of the 112th Congress may wish to take into account ongoing U.N. efforts to address the issue. Were Congress to decide to use U.N. mechanisms to combat VAW, a number of policy issues and U.N. system activities might be considered.

Priorities and Resource Allocation

Some experts argue that providing financial or technical support to international organizations that address VAW is an effective use of U.S. resources. They maintain that such assistance benefits the United States because it allows the U.S. government to share anti-VAW costs and resources with other governments and organizations. Moreover, some maintain that U.S. support of U.N. anti-VAW activities may prevent duplication of anti-VAW programs. Others argue that the U.S. government should focus on its own anti-VAW activities, and emphasize that U.N. anti-VAW activities may not always align with U.S. foreign assistance priorities. Moreover, some policymakers may contend that U.S. contributions to multilateral anti-VAW efforts be reduced in light of the global economic downturn, economic recession, and subsequent calls to reduce the U.S. budget deficit.

Funding U.N. Anti-VAW Efforts

Some maintain that the U.S. government should increase its contributions to U.N. programs and mechanisms that combat violence against women—particularly the U.N. Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women.[3] The Trust Fund is a multilateral U.N. mechanism that provides governments and NGOs with money specifically to address violence against women. It relies on voluntary contributions from U.N. member states, including the United States, which first contributed in FY2005. Policymakers, including some Members of Congress, have recognized the fund as a possible tool for addressing international violence against women. Proposed legislation in the 110th and 111th Congresses, for example, would have increased U.S. contributions to the fund.[4]

[3] See, for example, "Violence Against Women Expert Lauds Foreign Appropriations Subcommittee for Increasing Funds for UNIFEM and Its Trust Fund," Family Violence Prevention Fund press release, June 24, 2004. For further discussion of the Trust Fund, including U.S. contributions, see the "Key U.N. System Efforts" section.

[4] In the 110th Congress, House and Senate versions of the International Violence Against Women Act (S. 2279 and H.R. 5927) would have each authorized appropriations of $5 million for the Trust Fund over five fiscal years through the International Organizations and Programs account. In the 111th Congress, House and Senate versions of the same Act (H.R. 4594 and S. 2982) would have each authorized appropriations of $10 million to the Trust Fund from FY2011 through FY2015.

A number of other U.N. agencies, funds, and programs work to eliminate violence against women. These include offices and departments funded through the U.N. Regular Budget, such as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), which is now part of UN Women. U.N. specialized agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and International Labor Organization (ILO) also support anti-VAW activities through their regular budgets. Other U.N. programs and funds rely primarily on voluntary contributions from member states to support anti-VAW activities. These include the U.N. Development Program (UNDP), UN Women, and U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).[5]

United States Anti-VAW Activities in U.N. Fora

The United States may address VAW through several U.N. mechanisms, including multilateral treaties that focus on types or circumstances of violence against women. The Senate, for example, has provided its advice and consent for ratification of the U.N. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Trafficking Protocol). Other multilateral treaties that address VAW include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The United States has not ratified CEDAW or CRC, however, because of concerns related to U.S. sovereignty.[6]

The United States may also address VAW by promoting or advocating resolutions and decisions in U.N. fora such as the General Assembly, Security Council, and ECOSOC. In March 2007, for example, the U.S. government drafted a resolution on forced and early marriage during the 51st Session on the Commission on the Status of Women.[7] In October 2007, U.S. representatives to the United Nations advocated the adoption of a General Assembly resolution condemning the use of rape as an instrument of state policy.[8] In 2000, 2008, and 2009, the United States led in the adoption of U.N. Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889 respectively, addressing women, peace, and security.[9] More recently, in October 2010, the United States played a lead role in the adoption of Human Rights Council resolution 15/23 on the elimination of discrimination against women, which established a working group comprised of five independent experts to address discrimination against women in law and in practice.[10]

Possible Role of the Newly Established U.N. Agency for Women (UN Women)

On September 14, 2009, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution that sought to establish a new U.N. entity to address the well-being of women.[11] In the resolution, member states

[5] For more information on the anti-VAW activities of these U.N. entities, see the "Selected U.N. Commissions, Departments, and Specialized Agencies" section.

[6] For further details on the Trafficking Protocol, CEDAW and CRC, see the "Selected U.N. Conferences, Agreements, and Resolutions," section.

[7] U.N. document E/CN.6/2007/L.4, March 2, 2007.

[8] The resolution was adopted on December 18, 2007. (See U.N. document, A/RES/62/134, *Eliminating Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence in All Their Manifestations, Including in Conflict and Related Situations*.)

[9] For further information on these Security Council resolutions, see the "Selected U.N. Conferences, Agreements, and Resolutions" section.

[10] U.N. document, A/HRC/RES/15/23, adopted October 1, 2010.

[11] U.N. document, A/RES/63/311, adopted by consensus on September 14, 2009.

"strongly supported" the consolidation of four existing U.N. entities addressing women's issues into one entity, taking into account their existing mandates. The four entities include the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the U.N. Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the U.N. International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

In July 2010, the U.N. General Assembly unanimously adopted a second resolution that transferred the mandates and functions of DAW, UNIFEM, OSAGI, and INSTRAW into a newly established "United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women," referred to as UN Women. On September 14, 2010, Secretary-General Ban appointed Michelle Bachelet, former president of Chile, as the Executive Director and Under Secretary-General of the organization. Bachelet is a member of all senior U.N. decision-making bodies and reports directly to the Secretary-General. Her appointment was met with general approval by many policymakers, including some Members of Congress.[12] UN Women is headquartered in New York and became operational on January 1, 2011.

The full scope and extent of UN Women's impact on U.N. system-wide efforts to address violence against women remains to be seen. It is likely that the entity's role in addressing VAW will continue to evolve as its operations move forward. UN Women has identified violence against women as one of its main priorities areas, and has taken on most of the VAW-related responsibilities of DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI, and UNIFEM.[13] For example, it plays an active role in the Secretary-General's UNITE to End Violence Against Women Campaign and administers the U.N. Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women, which was previously managed by UNIFEM.

U.N. Definition of Violence Against Women

The U.N. General Assembly was the first international body to agree on a definition of violence against women. On December 20, 1993, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW).[14] The Declaration, which was supported by the U.S. government, describes VAW as "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 private life."[15] Though non-binding, DEVAW provides a standard for U.N. agencies and NGOs urging national governments to strengthen their efforts to combat VAW, and for governments encouraging other nations to combat violence against women.[16] Specifically, the Declaration calls

[12] Office of the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General, "Secretary-General's press encounter, announcing Ms. Michelle Bachelet as Head of UN Women," September 14, 2010. A "Dear Colleague" letter was circulated by Rep. Russ Carnahan asking Members to sign a letter to Secretary-General Ban "commending the appointment of such a qualified, committed and diplomatic woman to lead this important new entity."

[13] Other UN Women priorities include peace and security, leadership and participation, economic empowerment, national planning and budgeting, human rights, and fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals. For more information UN Women's VAW-related activities, see the "Selected U.N. Funds, Commissions, Departments, and Specialized Agencies" section.

[14] U.N. document, A/RES/48/104, December 20, 1993. DEVAW was adopted without a vote by the 48th Session of the U.N. General Assembly.

[15] The term "gender-based violence" is broader than VAW because it can include violence perpetrated against men and boys in addition to women and girls. In many instances, however, the two terms are used interchangeably.

[16] *A Concise Encyclopedia of the United Nations*, edited by Helmut Volger, Kluwer Law International, The Hague,

on countries to take responsibility for combating VAW, emphasizing that "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."[17]

Despite the international adoption of DEVAW, governments, organizations, and cultures continue to define VAW in a number of ways, taking into account unique factors and circumstances. How VAW is defined has implications for policymakers because the definition may determine the types of violence that are measured and addressed.

U.N. Secretary-General-led Initiatives

The current Secretary-General and his predecessors have sought to combat violence against women by supporting various studies and initiatives addressing the issue. Two such efforts—the U.N. Study on Violence Against Women, and the Secretary-General's UNITE to End Violence Against Women campaign—are discussed in the following sections.

U.N. Study on Violence Against Women

On July 6, 2006, then-U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan published an *In-depth Study on All Forms of Violence Against Women*.[18] The study provided a statistical overview of types of VAW, including information on its causes and consequences. It also examined U.N. system efforts to address VAW, identifying 32 U.N. entities that work to combat types and circumstances of VAW on a global, national, or local level.[19] (In February 2011, an updated inventory of U.N. system anti-VAW activities identified 36 U.N. entities addressing the issue.)[20] The study discussed gaps and challenges in U.N. system anti-VAW activities, including (1) implementation of legal and policy frameworks that guide U.N. system efforts to eliminate VAW, (2) data collection and research, (3) awareness raising and dissemination of best practices, (4) resource mobilization, and (5) coordination mechanisms at the international level.[21]

To address these issues, the study recommended that U.N. resources addressing VAW should be "increased significantly," and highlighted the need to provide countries with technical support that promotes best practices for VAW data collection and research. The study also urged national governments to establish national action plans on combating violence against women.

On December 19, 2006, in response to the Secretary-General's study, the U.N. General Assembly adopted resolution 61/143, which calls on U.N. member states and the Secretary-General to intensify efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women.[22] The study and the subsequent

Netherlands, 2002, p. 671.

[17] U.N. document, A/RES/48/104, December 20, 1993. (Article 4.)

[18] U.N. document, A/61/122/Add.1, July 6, 2006. The study was mandated by U.N. General Assembly resolution 58/185 on December 22, 2003.

[19] U.N. document, A/61/122/Add.1, July 6, 2006, p. 20.

[20] See *Preventing and Eliminating Violence Against Women: An Inventory of United Nations System Activities On Violence Against Women*, updated in February 2011.

[21] Ibid.

[22] U.N. document, A/RES/61/143, December 19, 2006. Specifically, the resolution urges U.N. member states to (1) take action to eliminate all forms of VAW through a more systematic, comprehensive, multi-sectoral, and sustained approach through national action plans; (2) end impunity for VAW by prosecuting and punishing all perpetrators; (3) review, revise, amend, or abolish laws and policies that discriminate against women; and (4) strengthen national health

resolution have contributed to recent U.N. efforts to enhance current U.N. anti-VAW efforts and develop new strategies to address the issue.

UNITE to End Violence Against Women Campaign

On February 25, 2008, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the launch of the UNITE to End Violence Against Women Campaign to raise public awareness of VAW and to ensure that policymakers at the highest level work to prevent and eradicate violence against women.[23] The campaign, which runs from 2008 to 2015, focuses on three key areas: global advocacy; U.N. leadership; and regional, national, and international partnerships. It builds on the momentum created by recent General Assembly and Security Council actions on all forms of violence against women,[24] as well as the work of women activists, NGOs, and other civil society organizations. The Campaign has five key outcomes to be achieved by all countries by 2015:

- adopting and enforcing national legislation aligned with international human rights standards;
- adopting and implementing multi-sectoral national action plans;
- establishing data collection and analysis systems;
- creating awareness-raising campaigns; and
- working to address sexual violence in conflict.

Selected U.N. System Interagency Activities

U.N. funds and programs are engaged in several interagency activities that address specific types and circumstances of VAW directly, or include combating VAW as part of a broader agenda.

The U.N. Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women

The U.N. Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women (the Trust Fund) is the only multilateral mechanism that specifically focuses on government and NGO efforts to combat VAW on regional, national, and local levels.[25] The Trust Fund is administered by UN Women and relies on voluntary contributions from national governments, the non-profit and private sectors, and individuals. Top government donors include Australia, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Since it became operational in 1997, the Trust Fund has distributed approximately $60 million in small grants to over 317 anti-VAW initiatives in approximately 124 countries and territories. Money from the Trust Fund is distributed primarily to non-profit organizations and, more

---

and social infrastructures to address the health consequences of VAW. The resolution also encourages states to increase voluntary contributions for U.N. activities that work toward eliminating VAW, and requests the Secretary-General to establish a coordinated database on the extent, nature, and consequences of all forms of VAW.

[23] More information on the campaign is available at http://endviolence.un.org/.

[24] This includes U.N. General Assembly resolution 62/134, *Eliminating Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence*, December 18, 2007, and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, October 31, 2000.

[25] The Trust Fund was established by U.N. General Assembly resolution 50/166 adopted on December 22, 1995.

recently, to U.N. country teams. In 2010, the Trust Fund awarded $10.1 million in grants to 13 groups in 18 countries, with an average project grant size of $776,000. The majority of grantees were women's organizations (31%), followed by U.N. Country Teams (23%), development or youth organizations (15%), and governmental and human right organizations (8%). The largest number of grants went to Africa (29%), followed by Asia and the Pacific (26%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (20%). Trust Fund grantees in 2010 included the Women's Union in Jordan, Women United Together in the Marshall Islands, the U.N. Country Team in Sri Lanka, and the Ministry of Human Rights in Burundi.[26]

Recognizing the relatively small amount of money administered by the Trust Fund, the Secretary-General's 2006 study on violence against women recommended that U.N. member states and other international donors "increase significantly the financial support for work on violence against women in the United Nations ... including the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women."[27] UN Women reports that since 2008 the Trust Fund's resource base has increased. This shift to larger and longer-term grants has allowed the Trust Fund to support larger-scale projects, many of which span three years. Despite this apparent progress, the Trust Fund met just 2.4% ($20.5 million) of the total amount requested by applicants ($857 million) during its 14th cycle (2009-2010).

The U.S. government has contributed to the Trust Fund since 2005, with funding levels ranging from $990,000 in FY2005 to $3.0 million in FY2010 (see **Table 1**). The Bush Administration did not request funding for the Trust Fund from FY2005 through FY2009, and the Obama Administration did not request funding from FY2010 through FY2012. Congress typically allocates money during the appropriations process. Funding for the Trust Fund is drawn from the International Organizations and Programs account and generally supplements U.S. voluntary contributions to UN Women (formerly UNIFEM).[28]

Table 1. U.S. Contributions to the U.N. Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women, FY2005—FY2012

($ in millions)

Fiscal Year	Administration Request	Actual Funding (unless otherwise indicated)
2005	—	0.992
2006	—	1.485
2007	—	1.485
2008	—	1.785
2009	—	2.500
2010	—	3.000
2011	—	Not yet available[a]
2012	—	To be determined

[26] A list of 2010 Trust Fund grantees and additional information on the Fund is available in *The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, Annual Report, 2010*, November 2010.

[27] U.N. document, A/61/122/Add.1, July 6, 2006, p. 113.

[28] The United States contributed $3.218 million to UNIFEM in FY2007; $3.571 million in FY2008; $4.5 million in FY2009; and $6 million in FY2010. The President requested $8 million in FY2012 for UN Women. All contributions were made under the International Organizations and Programs account.

Source: Congressional Budget Justifications, FY2006 through FY2012, U.S. Department of State; enacted foreign operations appropriations legislation.

a. FY2011 funding levels for the Trust Fund are not yet available. Title XI of P.L. 112-10, The Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011, states that $355 million shall be made available under the International Organizations and Programs (IO&P) account, which is where the Trust Fund has been funded in previous years. It does not provide a further breakdown of the account.

Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) Task Force on Violence Against Women

IANWGE is a network of designated gender focal points from U.N. agencies, offices, funds, and programs. It comprises 60 members representing 25 entities of the U.N. system. IANGWE, which is chaired by UN Women, supports a Task Force on Violence Against Women that aims to strengthen U.N. system-wide anti-VAW efforts. The Task Force is leading pilot projects in 10 countries to implement joint programming on violence against women.[29] Under the projects, U.N. country teams work with national governments to develop individual work plans that aim to increase national capacity to prepare, implement, monitor, and evaluate national efforts to end violence against women.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)

IASC is the primary U.N. mechanism for interagency coordination of humanitarian assistance. Participants include U.N. entities, international organizations, and NGOs. IASC supports a Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance that, among other things, works to carry out programs that prevent and respond to gender-based violence. In 2005, the Task Force published a manual, *Guidelines on Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings*, to assist communities, governments, and humanitarian organizations (including U.N. entities) in establishing and coordinating interventions to prevent and respond to sexual violence during the early phases of emergencies.[30] The Task Force meets every four to six weeks and includes representatives from over 20 U.N. entities and related NGOs.

U.N. Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (U.N. Action)

U.N. Action draws 13 U.N. entities together to improve and better coordinate the U.N. system response to sexual violence before and after conflict.[31] It operates through existing coordination mechanisms, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and focuses on building capacity and training advisers in anti-VAW programming at the country level. It aims to strengthen medical and legal services to survivors and, in the long term, address gender imbalances. It also works to raise public awareness of sexual violence and urges governments to address the issues.

[29] Co-conveners of the Task Force are the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA) and U.N. Women (formerly the U.N. Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)).The 10 countries participating in the pilot project are Burkina Faso, Chile, Fiji, Jamaica, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, Philippines, Rwanda, and Yemen.

[30] The IASC Guidelines are available at http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/products/docs/tfgender_GBVGuidelines2005.pdf.

[31] The 13 agencies, offices, or programs include U.N. Department of Political Affairs; U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations; U.N. Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO); U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); Joint U.N. Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); U.N. Development Program (UNDP); U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA); U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF); UN Women; World Food Program (WFP); and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Selected U.N. Conferences, Agreements, and Resolutions

This section discusses selected U.N. conferences, agreements, resolutions, and multilateral treaties that address VAW, either in whole or in part. It does not assess U.N. member state compliance with or implementation of these mechanisms.

U.N. World Conferences on Women

Since 1974, the United Nations has held four World Conferences on Women.[32] Recognition of VAW as an international human rights issue, however, was first achieved at the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1985, and reaffirmed at the Fourth World Conference in Beijing in 1995. The Nairobi Conference's main outcome document, negotiated and adopted by 152 U.N. member states—including the United States—laid the groundwork for future international anti-VAW initiatives. It noted that VAW was a "major obstacle to the achievement of peace and the other objectives of the [U.N. Women's] Decade and should be given special attention," and stated that member states should formulate legal measures to assist victims and establish national mechanisms to address VAW within families and society.[33] At the Fourth World Conference in Beijing, U.N. member states (including the United States) identified violence against women as one of the "12 critical areas of concern" for women, and also agreed that VAW "constitutes a violation of basic human rights and is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of [Women's] equality, development, and peace."[34]

U.N. Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

CEDAW is the only multilateral treaty that specifically focuses on the comprehensive rights of women. It calls for parties to eliminate discrimination against women in all areas of life, including healthcare, education, employment, domestic relations, law, and political participation. The Convention entered into force in 1981, and to date 187 U.N. member states are party to the treaty. The United States led the drafting of CEDAW but is one of seven U.N. member states that has not ratified the Convention. The Carter Administration signed CEDAW in 1980 and transmitted it to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, but the full Senate has not considered the treaty for advice and consent to ratification because of concerns that it may undermine U.S. sovereignty. Though the Convention text does not directly address VAW, its implementing body, the CEDAW committee, adopted a general recommendation affirming that gender-based violence is a form of gender discrimination. The committee defined gender-based violence as "violence

[32] In 1974, the United Nations coordinated and led the first World Conference on Women in Mexico City. The second conference was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1980, and the third conference was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1985. The first conference inaugurated the U.N. "Decade on Women," which spanned from 1976 to 1985, and included two additional World Conferences on Women. (The United Nations periodically designates years to raise awareness of and highlight disadvantaged groups. Examples include the Year of Refugees, of Youth, and of the Disabled.)

[33] U.N. document, A/CONF.116/28/Rev:1, 1986, *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise Achievements of the UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace,* Chapter 1, Section A: The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, paragraph 258.

[34] Platform for Action, The U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women, Action for Equality, Development and Peace, Beijing, China, September 1995, available at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/violence.htm.

that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately."[35]

U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

CRC is an international treaty that requires parties to ensure that all children have certain rights, regardless of sex.[36] Article 19 of CRC specifically addresses violence against children, stating that parties shall "protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child." CRC was unanimously adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on November 20, 1989, and entered into force on September 2, 1990. The United States was an active participant in the Convention's drafting. It joined in the General Assembly consensus adopting the Convention, and signed the treaty on February 16, 1995. Successive Administrations have chosen not to transmit CRC to the Senate for its advice and consent. To date, 193 parties have ratified the Convention—only the United States and Somalia have not ratified the treaty.[37]

Trafficking in Persons Protocol

In 1999, U.N. member states drafted the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. On November 15, 2000, the U.N. General Assembly adopted the Convention on Transnational Crime, which includes the Protocol on Trafficking. The Convention and its three Protocols were designed to enable countries to work together more closely against criminals engaged in cross-border crimes, including trafficking in women and girls. The Trafficking Protocol commits countries to enforce relevant laws against traffickers, provide some assistance and protect trafficking victims, and share intelligence and increase border security cooperation with other countries. The Protocol entered into force on December 25, 2003. The United States signed the treaty in December 2000, and the Senate gave its advice and consent to ratification on October 7, 2005. The United States became party to the Protocol on December 3, 2005. At present, 146 countries are party to the agreement.[38]

U.N. Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security

Since 2000, the U.N. Security Council has adopted several resolutions that address issues related to women, peace, and security. On October 31, 2000, the Security Council adopted **resolution 1325**, which addresses the impact of war and conflict on women and highlights the need for protection of women and girls from human rights abuses. The resolution, which was strongly supported by the United States, calls on all parties to armed conflict to "take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual

[35] General Recommendation No. 19 (11th session) on Violence Against Women, 1992. For further information on CEDAW, see CRS Report R40750, *The U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): Issues in the U.S. Ratification Debate*, by Luisa Blanchfield.

[36] In addition to sex, the Convention also states that children have certain rights regardless of "color ... language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status." (Preamble.) The Convention defines a child as "every human being below the age of eighteen years." (Article 1.)

[37] For more information, see CRS Report R40484, *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Background and Policy Issues*, by Luisa Blanchfield.

[38] The instrument of U.S. ratification was deposited on November 2, 2005. Parts of this section were drawn from CRS Report RL34317, *Trafficking in Persons: U.S. Policy and Issues for Congress*, by Alison Siskin and Liana Sun Wyler.

abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict."[39] It also urges U.N. member states and the U.N. Secretary-General to work toward increased representation and participation of women in all decision-making levels in national, regional, and international institutions that address conflict resolution, management, and prevention.[40] U.N. efforts in this area have intensified since 2003 and 2004, following media reports on sexual abuse and exploitation of vulnerable civilians by U.N. peacekeeping personnel.

In June 2008, when the United States served as president of the Security Council, then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice participated in an open thematic debate on "women, peace, and security: sexual violence in situations of armed conflict."[41] After the debate, Security Council members unanimously adopted **resolution 1820**, marking the first time the Security Council adopted a resolution on women and violence since resolution 1325. Resolution 1820 "demands the immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict in all acts of sexual violence against civilians with immediate effect."[42] It reaffirms commitment to resolution 1325, and notes that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide. It further requests that the U.N. Secretary-General establish training programs for all peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel deployed by the United Nations, and encourages troop and police contributing countries to take steps to heighten awareness of and prevent sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

On September 30, 2009, the U.N. Security Council adopted **resolution 1888**, which demands that all parties to armed conflict "take appropriate measures to protect civilians, including women and children, from all forms of sexual violence."[43] It reaffirms that sexual violence, when used as a tactic of war or as part of a widespread attack against civilian populations, can exacerbate armed conflict situations and may impede the restoration of international peace and security. The resolution calls on the U.N. Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative to provide leadership to address sexual violence in armed conflict, and to rapidly deploy a team of experts to situations of particular concern.[44] The United States, which served as Security Council President for September, strongly supported the adoption of the resolution, with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton serving as Chair of the Council meeting when the resolution was adopted.

On October 5, 2009, the Security Council adopted **resolution 1889,** which addresses obstacles to women's involvement in peace processes, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. It urges U.N. member states and international and regional organizations to take further measures to improve women's participation during all stages of the peace process, and strongly condemns all violations of international law committed against women and girls in armed and post-conflict situations. Specifically, it emphasizes "the responsibility of all States to end impunity and prosecute those responsible for all forms of violence committed against girls and women in armed conflict, including rape and other sexual violence."[45] As with previous resolutions on women,

[39] U.N. document, S/RES/1325 (2000), October 31, 2000.

[40] In addition, the resolution "urges member states to increase their voluntary, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts." (See paragraph 7.)

[41] In a Security Council Open Debate, non-Council members may address the Council without being invited.

[42] U.N. document, S/RES/1820 (2008), June 19, 2008.

[43] U.N. document, S/RES/1888 (2009), September 30, 2009.

[44] On February 2, 2010, Secretary-General Ban announced the appointment of Margot Wallström of Sweden as the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, see http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sga1220.doc.htm.

[45] U.N. document S/RES/1889 (2009), October 5, 2009.

peace, and security, the United States strongly supported and played a key role in the adoption of the resolution.

Selected U.N. Funds, Commissions, Departments, and Specialized Agencies

This section highlights selected U.N. bodies that—either in whole or in part—address international violence against women, and provides examples of VAW-related activities. It does not measure the extent to which VAW is directly addressed or is part of a larger initiative or program.[46]

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

CSW, a functional Commission under the U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), is the principal intergovernmental policymaking body on women's issues in the United Nations.[47] It meets annually at U.N. Headquarters and is composed of 45 member state representatives elected by ECOSOC members (other non-member states may serve as observers). CSW observes, monitors, and implements measures for the advancement of women, including those that address violence against women. It also reviews and supports the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into the U.N. system.

Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)

DPKO prepares and manages U.N. peacekeeping operations. It focuses on all types and circumstances of VAW, particularly sexual exploitation and abuse of vulnerable women and girls by peacekeeping personnel.[48] In order to prevent and address such abuses, each peacekeeping mission has a gender unit that supports regional and international initiatives addressing violence against women. The gender units support legal reform processes in particular countries and serve as resources for national authorities and law reform organizations. Gender units also encourage collaboration among law enforcement, victim support organizations, and the judiciary, and work to ensure that women's NGOs are included in national efforts to end violence against women. Moreover, several peacekeeping units—including those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, and Timor-Leste—have conducted training activities for peacekeeping personnel on preventing and responding to violence against women.[49] Gender advisers and focal points within nine peacekeeping operations also work to guarantee that gender policies are taken seriously and integrated into every mission.[50]

---

[46] For information on United Nations and U.S. funding of U.N. system agencies, funds, and programs, see CRS Report RL33611, *United Nations System Funding: Congressional Issues*, by Marjorie Ann Browne.

[47] CSW was established in February 1946. The United States is currently a member and its term will expire in 2012.

[48] For further information on U.N. efforts to address sexual abuse and exploitation and prevent trafficking in persons, see *Report to the Congress on United Nations Efforts to Prevent Trafficking in Persons and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in U.N. Peacekeeping Missions*, submission to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate and to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, of the U.S. House of Representatives by the State Department, February-August 2007. (As requested in Section 104(e) of P.L. 109-164, the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, FY2006.)

[49] For more information on DPKO efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse, see http://www.un.org/depts/dpko/CDT/about.html. For further discussion of U.N. peacekeeping and allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation and the U.N. response, see CRS Report RL33700, *United Nations Peacekeeping: Issues for Congress*, by Marjorie Ann Browne.

[50] For more information, see "Gender and Peacekeeping," at http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/.

U.N. Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

UN Women is the lead U.N. entity addressing women's empowerment and gender equality. The organization, which became operational in January 2011, was established by U.N. member states amid concerns that the way in which the U.N. system addressed gender issues was fragmented, weak, and under-resourced. It is composed of four previous U.N. entities that addressed women's issues—the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the U.N. Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the U.N. International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). Under the General Assembly resolutions establishing UN Women, the mandates and functions of OSAGI, DAW, UNIFEM and INSTRAW were transferred to the new entity. Their activities related to VAW are expected to continue. Examples include:

- raising awareness of VAW in local and national governments—particularly among law enforcement, parliamentarians, government ministries, and the judiciary (formerly UNIFEM);
- strengthening anti-VAW legislation and policies related to domestic violence, trafficking, and forced marriage, and assisting governments and organizations in implementing such efforts (formerly UNIFEM);
- supporting data collection and research on international violence against women (formerly UNIFEM, DAW, and INSTRAW);
- supporting and servicing agenda items and discussions for U.N. intergovernmental bodies that promote gender equality, including the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and CSW (formerly DAW);
- conducting research and compiling reports for the Secretary-General on violence against women, including the *Secretary-General's In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence Against Women* and its updates (formerly DAW);[51]
- supporting the U.N. Special Adviser on Gender Issues, promoting interagency collaboration to eliminate VAW, and developing new strategies, programs, and policies to address gender equality in the U.N. system (formerly OSAGI); and
- coordinating and implementing outcomes and follow-up to the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, and U.N. Security Council 1325 resolution on Women, Peace, and Security, both of which address violence against women (formerly OSAGI).

UN Women is also the designated coordinator of the Secretary-General's UNITE to End Violence Against Women Campaign.

U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

OHCHR, which works to promote and protect human rights established under the U.N. Charter and international human rights instruments, supports research and operational activities that address violence against women. OHCHR commissions research and analyze access to justice for

[51] Most recently, UN Women published a report in July 2011 entitled *Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012, In Pursuit of Justice*, which highlights the role of access to justice and rule of law in achieving women's rights (including freedom from violence). A copy of the report is available at http://progress.unwomen.org/pdfs/EN-Report-Progress.pdf.

victims of sexual violence, with a focus on the prosecution of rape under international humanitarian and human rights law. OHCHR field operations work to reduce or eliminate VAW at the national and regional level, providing technical assistance in law reform and government monitoring, and organizing training activities for governments and members of civil society.

OHCHR also supports U.N. Human Rights Council country and thematic rapporteurs who address types and circumstances of violence against women and girls. This includes the position of Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences, which was established in 1994 by a U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution.[52] Other rapporteurs who address aspects of VAW include the Special Rapporteurs on Trafficking in Persons; the Sale of Children; and Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions.[53]

World Health Organization (WHO)

The WHO addresses VAW through various activities, including policy formulation, program guidance, advocacy, and research. Specifically, it has developed a series of VAW norms and guidelines and conducted studies on VAW prevalence.[54] It also leads a research initiative to develop a network of researchers, policymakers, and activists to ensure VAW is addressed from a variety of disciplines.[55] It develops training programs and provides technical support on sexual violence for healthcare providers in conflict areas, and works with partners to develop a framework for integrating HIV prevention activities into intimate partner and sexual violence programs. WHO also works to raise public awareness of VAW, particularly in the context of HIV/AIDS. Such activities include VAW sensitization programs for civil servants, journalists, healthcare providers, and policymakers.

U.N. Development Program (UNDP)

UNDP addresses VAW through programs and activities that involve trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and disaster, conflict, and post-conflict situations. It works with governments to develop national strategies to protect victims of intimate partner violence, and aims to incorporate gender perspectives into crises prevention and recovery in conflict situations. UNDP also promotes VAW awareness through national and local campaigns, including the "16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence" campaign and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. In addition, UNDP works on a national level to disseminate knowledge and awareness of VAW through radio, television, and posters. It also supports a website, GenderNet, which facilitates discussions on gender and violence against women.[56]

---

[52] The Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women is Rashida Manjoo of South Africa. According to the resolution establishing the position, the Special Rapporteur shall "seek and receive information on violence against women, its causes and consequences from Governments, treaty bodies, specialized agencies, other special rapporteurs responsible for various human rights questions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and to respond effectively to such information." The Rapporteur shall also "recommend measures, ways and means ... to eliminate violence against women and its causes, and to remedy its consequences."

[53] The Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Execution addresses honor killings, when women are killed to preserve the family honor; and femicide, when infants are killed because of their gender.

[54] Norms and guidelines include *Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Interviewing Trafficked Women*; *Preventing Child Maltreatment: A Guide to Taking Action and Generating Evidence*; and *Preventing Injuries and Violence: A Guide for Ministries of Health*.

[55] The Sexual Violence Research Initiative is a WHO/Global Forum for Health Service program. It has developed a research agenda and studied women's responses to sexual violence. For more information, see http://www.svri.org/.

[56] Further information on UNDP women's programs is available at http://www.undp.org/women/.

U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF works to protect children's rights, provide for their basic needs, and expand their opportunities. The majority of UNICEF's violence against girls programs focus on capacity building, with an emphasis on awareness-raising and research. On a global level, UNICEF has developed policies to protect women and girls from sexual abuse by U.N. staff and other aid workers. On a country level, it addresses different manifestations of VAW, which vary depending by country or region. National UNICEF programs address female genital cutting, early marriage, trafficking, domestic violence, school-related violence, and violence in armed conflict. UNICEF also assists governments in drafting anti-VAW legislation, and works to raise VAW awareness among teachers, police, and the judiciary.

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR's mandate is to provide protection to refugees and other populations of concern. Since 2003, it has promoted and encouraged prevention and treatment guidelines in field operations to address the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence.[57] In March 2008, UNHCR published the *UNHCR Handbook on the Protection of Displaced Women and Girls*, to distribute to UNHCR staff and partners. In addition, UNHCR (along with nine other U.N. agencies) signed an interagency statement to address female genital mutilation.[58] It has sponsored regional and country-level training programs on VAW prevention and response for its staff and implementing partners. It also works to establish standard operating procedures for the prevention of and response to VAW in each country operation.[59]

U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)

UNOCHA coordinates humanitarian response, policy development, and humanitarian advocacy among U.N. agencies and national and international actors. It serves as the co-chair of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance, providing support for the development and implementation of Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines for gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian settings. UNOCHA also implements a confidential complaints mechanism on gender-based violence, and works to raise public awareness of the issue. The organization's Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), for example, has produced several publications and videos on VAW in conflict and female genital cutting.[60]

[57] The UNHCR guidelines are complemented by the 2005 IASC guidelines on responding to sexual and gender-based violence. IASC guidelines focus on the emergency phase and while UNHCR guidelines focus more broadly on the displacement cycle.

[58] Other U.N. agencies that signed the interagency statement include OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, U.N. Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM and WHO.

[59] This section was written by Rhoda Margesson, Specialist in International Humanitarian Policy.

[60] This section was written by Rhoda Margesson, Specialist in International Humanitarian Policy.

U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA)

UNFPA aims to help countries improve reproductive health and expand access to family planning services.[61] It addresses VAW through a combination of research-based and operational activities. On a global level, UNFPA has undertaken studies on the socio-cultural context of VAW, and hosts workshops and meetings on sexual violence. It develops guidelines and tools to combat VAW, and supports sensitivity training for medical professionals.[62] On a national level, UNFPA works with governments to develop national strategies to address VAW prevention and protection, and provides counseling to girls who experience FGC or forced marriage. UNFPA also supports basic services to VAW victims, including legal and counseling services and access to shelter.

U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

UNODC is the guardian of the U.N. Trafficking Protocol. Its Global Program Against Trafficking in Human Beings assists member states to implement the Trafficking Protocol and prevent human trafficking. It also aims to address domestic violence and human trafficking by developing policies to support women victims of violence, particularly those in prison. Specifically, it works to integrate VAW and gender perspectives into its efforts to build the capacity of criminal justice systems. In October 2010, for example, UNODC developed an assessment tool which addresses the treatment of women victims of violence in prisons and criminal justice systems as a whole.[63]

International Labor Organization (ILO)

The ILO promotes internationally recognized human and labor rights. It supports a number of programs that combat trafficking and forced and bonded labor, many of which include gender-specific components. Through the International Program to Eliminate Child Labor (IPEC) for instance, ILO works with participating governments to (1) prevent children from becoming child laborers; (2) remove children from hazardous work, including exploitative work like forced prostitution; and (3) offer children and their families education, income and employment opportunities. The ILO Conditions of Work and Employment Program researches violence in the workplace, including violence against women. The ILO Labor Standards Department also conducts research on violence against migrant workers, particularly women, as well as violence against indigenous and tribal women workers.

Joint U.N. Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

UNAIDS works with international partners to identify and address the possible links between HIV/AIDS and violence against women. It promotes education and awareness of HIV within international peacekeeping operations, and national uniformed services through training and distribution of peer education kits, which include sections on gender issues and sexual violence. UNAIDS has also worked in Southern and Eastern Africa to determine how to improve health services for women who have experienced violence. It also supports regional task forces on VAW in emergency settings, collaborates with WHO to improve clinic services on sexual violence, and works with experts to develop cost estimates for integrating VAW awareness, prevention, and

[61] More information on UNFPA anti-VAW activities is available at http://www.unfpa.org/gender/violence/htm.

[62] These programs have been tested in several countries, including Cape Verde, Ecuador, Lebanon, Lithuania, Russia, and Sri Lanka.

[63] For more information, see http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/E-book.pdf.

treatment into AIDS programs. In addition, the UNAIDS Global Coalition on Women and AIDS raises public awareness of HIV/AIDS and VAW linkages.[64]

Author Information

Luisa Blanchfield
Specialist in International Relations

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.

[64] For more information on HIV/AIDS and violence against women, see http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/Resources/FeatureStories/archive/2009/20091110_VAW.asp.