



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR  
THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN  
25 NOVEMBER 2010

Proposal for parliaments

Background

Violence against women has reached pandemic proportions: according to available country data, seven out of 10 women experience sexual and physical violence during their lifetime. No society is immune to such violence. It can take on many forms and occurs just about everywhere: domestic violence, sexual abuse of girls at school, sexual harassment in the workplace, early or forced marriage, genital mutilation, sexual assault, rape as a weapon of war, to name the most common. Nowadays, the chances of a woman aged between 15 and 44 years falling victim to domestic violence and rape is higher than the risk of cancer, a road accident or malaria.

Some progress has been noted, however. The action of several parliaments has helped make the problem of violence against women more visible nationally and has made it a priority on the political agenda. A growing number of countries have passed laws and devised national action plans to tackle this problem. But there are still loopholes and much remains to be done to speed up progress and make a real difference to the lives of women everywhere.

We are aware that the response to violence against women must be both comprehensive and adapted to the reality of each country. It must encompass prevention, protection and assistance for victims, and the repression of perpetrators. To be effective, action must be based on close collaboration between the various stakeholders responsible for preventing and combating violence against women.

Proposed theme

Against this background, and to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November, parliaments are requested to mobilize around the following theme:

“Building partnerships to combat violence against women”

Why build partnerships?

- To enhance the participation of all interested parties in the legislative process needed to combat violence against women;
- To monitor the enforcement and impact of laws to counter violence against women on the ground;
- To bring about a change in mentality and mobilize public opinion with a view to eliminating gender-based violence.

Working in partnership with key stakeholders in preventing and combating violence against women helps to:

- Have a better grasp of the situation on the ground, the stakes involved, and the reality of women who are victims of violence and ensure that the legislative response is adequate;

- Better evaluate the costs of violence against women;
- Pool resources and knowledge;
- Better understand what works and what does not work and make the necessary adjustments;
- Enhance coordination with a view to effective enforcement of legislation.

Who are these stakeholders and potential partners? The following list is by no means exhaustive:

- National and local authorities: relevant ministries and in particular the health, security, justice, social affairs and women's affairs ministries and statistics offices that collect and analyse data on the problem;
- Mediators and human rights organizations that monitor enforcement of legislation;
- Victims of violence;
- Civil society organizations, in particular those that provide shelter and support to the victims of violence and groups that reach out to youth and men with a view to preventing violence;
- Religious and community leaders ;
- The media, so that they can air the issue of violence against women and advocate zero tolerance;
- Schools and universities; and
- The private sector.

#### Proposed activities

Parliaments may wish to organize on 25 November one of the many activities that bring one or more key stakeholders together, such as:

- Consultations in parliament or directly with the stakeholders involved on violence against women and national solutions to combat the problem;
- A special discussion about a relevant bill;
- A national audit of progress made and difficulties encountered in enforcing the law with the various stakeholders involved (magistrates, prosecutors, police service, attorneys, health and social services, civil society, etc.);
- A conference or seminar dedicated to identifying ways of preventing this form of violence;
- Mobilization of the media through press conferences and radio and television programmes with a panel of key stakeholders.

Ideally, these activities should help to develop long-term partnerships.

#### Tools and visibility

A special section of the IPU website has been dedicated to the issue of violence against women: [www.ipu.org/vaw](http://www.ipu.org/vaw). The IPU will list under that section the activities planned by various parliaments to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women of which it is informed.

These activities will be showcased as contributions to the UN Secretary-General's campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women on the Say NO-UNiTE website at: <http://www.saynotoviolence.org>

The poster and brochure developed for the IPU campaign entitled Parliaments take action on violence against women will be made available to parliaments upon request. Your parliament can draw inspiration from this material to come up with an activity to mark the Day on 25 November and beyond.

For any queries concerning the IPU campaign, please contact Ms. Brigitte Filion, Programme Officer, at: [bf@mail.ipu.org](mailto:bf@mail.ipu.org) or tel.: +41 22 919 41 20.

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