



ACCELERATING ACTIONS FOR ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

UN WOMEN'S IMPACT IN 2022 AND 2023

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**ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SECTION
UN WOMEN**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AC GBV	Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence (Generation Equality)
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
COTLA	Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ESP	Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence
EU	European Union
EUR	Euros
EVAWG	Ending violence against women and girls
FGE	<i>Fiscalía General del Estado</i> (State Attorney-General's Office), Ecuador
FGM	Female genital mutilation
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GNWS	Global Network of Women's Shelters
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
ILO	International Labour Organization
LNOB	Leave no one behind
MESECVI	Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Para Convention
NAP	National action plan
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SC/SPS	Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Initiative
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SOPs	Standard operating procedures
TF GBV	Technology-facilitated gender-based violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC	United Nations Statistical Commission
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USD	United States dollars
VAPP	Violence against Persons' Prohibition Act (Nigeria)
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WEPs	Women's Empowerment Principles
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS-HA	Women Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact (Generation Equality)

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1. INTRODUCTION

One in three women experience violence in their lifetime.¹ As alarming as it is, this figure is conservative and does not include all forms of violence,² which spans across private and public spaces, both online and offline. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is deeply rooted in gender-based discrimination, social norms that tolerate violence and gender stereotypes that perpetuate cycles of violence. The risks of VAWG are exacerbated by poverty and crises (including climate-induced disasters, economic fluctuations and armed conflicts), and marginalization based on sexual orientation, race, disabilities and other intersecting identities. For instance, climate change-induced disasters displace millions, including an estimated 80 per cent of women³ and girls, increasing the risks they face to experience VAWG, including sexual violence and trafficking.⁴ The COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns led to a “shadow pandemic” and a drastic increase in domestic violence as women were stuck inside with their abusers and had limited to no access to services. Sexual harassment, trolling doxing and stalking⁵ – all forms of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TF GBV) – are increasingly weaponized to intimidate, silence and discredit women, especially those in public life, threatening women’s and girls’ safety, reputation, participation in political and public lives, and mental health.⁶ In parallel, the backlash on gender equality and the pushback on women’s rights is undermining progress and threatening gains made while online platforms are providing new avenues for reinforcing and amplifying harmful social norms, stereotypes and misogynist attitudes that underlie and drive VAWG.

UN Women’s analysis of the national submissions to the review of the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action revealed that ending violence against women and girls was a top priority for the majority of States (88 per cent) in the past five years. Significant strides have been made across the world with the adoption of laws and policies to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, including through prevention strategies and multi-sectoral services for survivors of

violence. As of 2023, 104 countries had comprehensive laws addressing domestic violence⁷ and 78 per cent of countries now provide budgetary commitments for services VAWG.⁸ The impact of such measures is evident, with countries enacting domestic violence laws reporting lower rates of intimate-partner violence (9.5 per cent) compared to those without such legislation (16.1 per cent).⁹

Yet, violence against women and girls continues to present a global human rights and public health concern. In some countries, violence against women and girls is estimated to cost countries up to 3.7 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) – more than double what most governments spend on education.¹⁰ Between 2018 and 2023, donors invested a total of 2.06 billion USD towards gender-based violence (GBV) prevention.¹¹ From 2017–2023, the European Union (EU) made an unprecedented investment in seed funding of the Spotlight Initiative of EUR 500 million. Despite these efforts, current levels of funding remain insufficient given the extent of VAWG and the need for impactful and evidence-based programme-delivery and services. Violence against women and girls is preventable and we know more than ever before about what works to prevent violence against women and girls.¹² Evidence demonstrates that the presence of a strong and autonomous feminist movement is the single-most critical factor to drive policy change on ending VAW, both in transnational contexts and in domestic policymaking.¹³ However, the sector remains chronically underfunded. Financing through official development assistance (ODA) for gender equality saw its first decline in 10 years, with the proportion of funding for dedicated gender equality assistance.¹⁴ This shrinking financial support highlights an urgent need for renewed investment and political will to seriously address VAWG.

The issue remains grave, but the encouraging news is that reducing and preventing VAWG is achievable and there is more evidence than ever on what works to accelerate progress towards ending violence for women and girls.

2. ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

UN Women was established in 2010¹⁵ as a result of lobbying by women's movements, in recognition that there was a need for a United Nations (UN) agency dedicated to the promotion of women's rights and gender equality among Member States and within the UN system. UN Women was created with a unique triple mandate – encompassing normative support, UN system coordination, and operational activities – to mobilize urgent and sustained action to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The triple mandate is also vital in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and advancing the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and other international policy frameworks that effectively accelerate efforts to end violence against women and girls (EVAWG). Ending violence against women is central to achieving gender equality and UN Women has been working to ensure that it remains a global, regional and country priority for governments and other stakeholders.

Ten years since its formation as UN Women, the organization has learned where it is most effective – and where it needs to invest to improve its impact. In 2022, UN Women's new strategic plan took effect in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls and exacerbated all aspects of gender inequality.¹⁶ It

was clear that bold actions and increased financing were needed to rebuild better and equal, address the needs of all women and girls and leave no one behind (LNOB). The Strategic Plan for 2022–2025 set ambitious goals across UN Women's four established thematic impact areas: (i) governance and participation in public life; (ii) women's economic empowerment; (iii) ending violence against women and girls; and (iv) women, peace and security, humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction.

These impact areas are closely interconnected, and EVAWG is a cross-cutting issue for all of UN Women's areas of work, as women and girls' rights cannot be fulfilled while they are not safe. The cross-thematic areas of work include ending violence against women in politics, addressing sexual harassment and exploitation in the world of work, combating trafficking and sexual violence against migrant women, and tackling sexual violence in conflict and humanitarian settings. This report highlights UN Women's impact only under its EVAWG thematic focus area from the period from 2022 to 2023.

UN Women's comprehensive approach to EVAWG is articulated across five pillars: laws and policies; prevention; response; data and research; and support to women's rights movements. UN Women operates to end VAWG in over 80 countries, supporting governments and inter-governmental bodies, women's rights organizations (WROs), other civil society groups and all partners to address VAWG in their various contexts.

2.1 UN Women's approach to ending violence against women and girls

UN Women works to end violence against women and girls using a comprehensive approach that addresses five interconnected areas: robust laws and policies; prevention; response; data and research; and support to women's rights movements. UN Women applies this approach through its triple mandate, which supports the setting of global norms and

standards, coordinating and convening stakeholders on the issue of EVAWG and implementing programming. Complementing these efforts, UN Women's interventions and support also focus on enhancing coordination mechanisms, advancing gender-related data and statistics, and supporting global, regional and national programmes.



Figure 1. UN Women areas of work, from its theory of change

BOX 1**UN Women's response during COVID-19**

When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in 2020, emerging data and reports from those on the front lines showed that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, had intensified. UN Women led the way in setting policy standards and developing guidance to ensure that the issue of VAWG was prioritized and that responses were effective and aligned with 'do no harm' principles. This included preparing policy briefs on addressing the shadow pandemic,¹⁷ with specific guidance on prevention,¹⁸ essential services¹⁹ and data,²⁰ including a decision tree²¹ for ethical research, and online violence.²²

UN Women's programming work, notably through the Spotlight Initiative and Safe Cities,²³ quickly adapted to respond to the shifting needs of institutional and civil society partners to ensure that measures to address VAWG were included in the COVID-19 response and recovery at country, regional and global levels, in line with the principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB).

Member States were mobilized by the United Nations Secretary-General's call for a "global ceasefire" and the UN system came together to support governments to end violence against women, with 538 measures on strengthening services captured in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women Global COVID-19 Gender Tracker,²⁴ which was last updated in 2022. Programmatic responses also focused on providing quality essential services adapted to the pandemic context and to increase knowledge and awareness-support for community mobilization.

Source: UN Women. 2020. COVID-19 and Ending Violence against Women and Girls.



2.2 UN Women's flagship initiatives and joint programming on ending violence against women and girls

Since its inception, UN Women has led the development of key frameworks and laid the foundations for initiatives in the interconnected areas of prevention, response and data collection in line with its comprehensive approach. In close partnerships with UN agencies, civil society, government and academia, UN

Women's flagship EVAWG initiatives are based on a collaborative model that reflects UN Women's engagement to foster multi-stakeholder partnerships as the only possible solution to ending violence against women and girls.

UN Women's Ending Violence Against Women and Girls initiatives, frameworks and joint programmes

BOX 2

Guiding transformative prevention interventions

The RESPECT Women framework²⁵ is an evidence-based guide developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Women and endorsed in 2019 by seven UN/international agencies and five governments to support policymakers in scaling effective strategies to prevent VAWG at both national and local levels using evidence from interventions that have been proven to work. Organized around seven strategic areas – Relationship skills; Empowerment of women; Services; Poverty reduction; Environments made safe; Child and adolescent abuse prevention; and Transformed attitudes, beliefs, and norms – the RESPECT framework provides a comprehensive approach to tackling the root causes of violence. By offering actionable steps, it encourages policymakers to implement and adapt interventions that have the rigour required to reduce violence and improve women's safety. The framework also has a well-elaborated implementation package, which is a valuable resource for programme implementers and researchers who play a critical role in innovating, adapting and evaluating prevention programmes to meet the specific needs of their communities. The RESPECT framework has so far been rolled by UN Women in nine countries across Asia and Africa.

BOX 3

Engaging local authorities to end sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence

The Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces (SC/SPS)²⁶ Global Flagship Programme works with women's rights organizations, governments, UN agencies and other partners to develop, implement and evaluate comprehensive approaches to prevent and respond to sexual harassment against women and girls in public spaces in different settings (e.g., urban, rural, online). Since 2011, SC/SPS has generated important evidence about what works to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and other forms of VAWG in public spaces and to address gaps in data on sexual harassment. The SC/SPS has supported the introduction or strengthening of legislation on sexual harassment in over 25 countries. Evaluations reveal a reduction in the prevalence of sexual harassment in public transport in Quito; improved sense of safety, hygiene and comfort among women and girls in marketplaces in Port Moresby; and an increase in the autonomous mobility of women to gain employment in Cairo.

Sources: UN Women. 2017. Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces: Global results report; UN Women. 2021. Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls global initiative: Global results report 2017–2020; UN Women. 2017. Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces: Global results report; UN Women. 2022. Safe Cities Evaluation Final Report; for other results of the Port Moresby Safe City Programme, see Summary Port Moresby: A Safe City for Women and Girls Programme

BOX 4**Supporting ending violence against women and girls inter-agency comprehensive models**

Launched in 2017, the European Union and United Nations Spotlight Initiative²⁷ represented the world's largest targeted and funded effort to end all forms of violence against women and girls, with seed investment of EUR 500 million from the EU. Unique to the initiative is a whole-of-society approach that placed ending violence against women and girls at the heart of national development priorities and aimed to give local communities the tools they needed to address violence in their specific context. The model worked to address laws and policies, strengthen institutions, prevention, response services, data and research, and support to women's movement. In particular, the Spotlight Initiative's support to the women's movement, which included grant-giving but also the inclusion of women's rights organizations and civil society international governance mechanisms, was a driving force behind the sustainable, transformative results seen in the Spotlight Initiative. According to an Impact Report,²⁸ the Initiative's comprehensive model, built on UN Women's theory of change, was found to be 70–90 per cent more effective at reducing the prevalence of violence than siloed or piecemeal approaches and small-scale interventions. The first iteration of this global initiative (referred to as the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative) came to an end in December 2023 and the Spotlight 2.0 fund was established in April 2024 with the goal of becoming a multi-donor fund that drives joint UN EVAWG programming.

Source: Spotlight Initiative. 2024. A pathway for ending violence against women and girls – Impact Report 2017-2023. p. 2.

BOX 5**Filling knowledge gaps for evidence-based policies and programmes**

From 2018–2022, UN Women and the WHO implemented phase I of the global Joint Programme on Violence against Women Data.²⁹ Building on strategic partnerships for advancing both survey and administrative data, the Joint Programme was created in response to existing gaps in the collection and use of data on various forms of VAWG. More reliable, higher quality, up-to-date and comparable data at the national, regional and global levels is crucial for informing policies and programmes to address VAWG. Strengthening countries' capacities to collect, analyse, report and use data on VAWG in accordance with globally agreed methodological, safety and ethical standards is essential to achieving goals and commitments under CEDAW, the BPfA, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The programme has successfully transformed the VAWG data landscape by increasing the availability and accessibility of VAWG data, including prevalence survey data, administrative data, and data on femicide and TF GBV.

BOX 6**Responding to violence against women and girls and ensuring survivors' access to available, quality multi-sectoral services**

In phases I–II of The Joint Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence (2013–2019), UN Women, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), WHO, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UNDP developed global standards on the provision of a coordinated set of essential services for VAWG survivors in the health, justice/policing and social service sectors. These standards and guidelines comprise the Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence (ESP) which, as of the end of 2023, had contributed to developing quality standards and tools on response in more than 90 countries worldwide. Findings from an assessment of the ESP's initial rollout in 10 pilot countries show that it has been instrumental in advancing VAWG response in the areas of national policy and legislative change and strengthening capacity of service-providers and organizations to deliver survivor services aligned with these standards, establishing itself as the minimum standard for VAWG response in several countries. The work of the Joint Programme has also fostered greater unity and collaboration among a diverse set of partners, including UN agencies, and greater alignment of VAWG response efforts at the global, regional and country levels. Overall, these activities have increased awareness regarding the urgent need to provide quality essential services for VAWG survivors, driven legislative changes and contributed to the establishment of specialized response units. These findings underscore the ESP's role as a cornerstone for effective and coordinated national responses to VAWG.

Source: UN Women. 2018. Assessment of the initial rollout of the Essential Services Package (ESP) in Phase II of the Joint Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence.

Specific focus on some forms and manifestations of violence against women and girls

Different forms and manifestations of VAWG require specific approaches. In addition to addressing domestic violence and sexual violence, UN Women has in 2022 and 2023 particularly advanced the agenda on sexual harassment, femicide and

technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and highlighted the gendered root causes of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and early and forced child marriage.

BOX 7**Fostering partnerships for a comprehensive approach to ending technology-facilitated gender-based violence**

UN Women has prioritized addressing TF GBV as part of its comprehensive approach to ending violence against women and girls. It is doing so by fostering multi-stakeholder and transformative partnerships. This starts by contributing³⁰ to global standard-setting, such as the CSW67 Agreed Conclusions³¹ and the Global Digital Compact.³² It also includes UN Women's support for alliances as the convener of the Generation Equality Action Coalitions³³ and technical lead of the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse.³⁴ Because comprehensive laws and policies are needed to respond

to and prevent TF GBV, global normative frameworks,³⁵ as well as regional or subregional ones in the Americas,³⁶ the Arab States³⁷ and Eastern Europe and Central Asia,³⁸ were assessed in their response to gender equality as it relates to technology and innovation, to feed into model legislation on TF GBV with global and regional women's rights mechanisms.³⁹ Policy and programming initiatives include integrating TF GBV in the provision of essential services to survivors, and working to address the key drivers of TF GBV by transforming social norms⁴⁰ and engaging youth. Partnerships⁴¹ with the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC),⁴² regional economic commissions, national statistical offices, women's machineries and women's rights organizations as well as academia are also being leveraged to fill gaps in the definition⁴³ and measurement⁴⁴ of TF GBV.

BOX 8

Spearheading global standards to inform regional and national responses to femicide

Femicide (or feminicide) is the intentional killing of a woman or girl because of her gender. In 2023, an estimated 51,100 women and girls⁴⁵ worldwide were killed by intimate partners or other family members. UN Women's work on femicide has focused on strengthening data-collection efforts through its partnership with UNODC that led to the development of the Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls,⁴⁶ which was endorsed by the UNSC, and has since been supporting its implementation at country level. UN Women has also led important processes to address feminicide and the high levels of impunity through developing laws to criminalize femicide/feminicide as a specific crime type, as well as policies and protocols to guide investigation and prosecution, and by strengthening the capacities of different State actors, primarily in the justice system (police, prosecutors, forensic institutions and judiciary). In Latin America, following the adoption of the model law to prevent, punish and eradicate femicide/feminicide by the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Para Convention (MESECVI),⁴⁷ and with the support of UN Women, 18 countries now have femicide/feminicide as a distinct crime in their legislation, and victims' rights and reparations have been strengthened. The model law was followed by the development of the Latin American Model Protocol for the Investigation of Gender-related Killings of Women (femicide/feminicide)⁴⁸ which is being adopted by several countries in the region. In Europe and Central Asia, UN Women has led the conceptualization of femicide and paved the way to creating femicide watches – mechanisms to monitor femicide – in the region. UN Women partnered with women's rights organizations, which led to the development of a data-collection model systematizing the available data on femicide from all responsible courts, police departments, justice systems and media monitoring. In turn, governments and authorities in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia have expressed their commitment⁴⁹ to work on eradicating femicide and establishing a femicide watch.

2.3 UN Women's convening role and coordination mandate for ending violence against women and girls initiatives

In working towards preventing and responding to violence against women and girls, UN Women coordinates and works with partner agencies in the UN system and also convenes and collaborates with women's rights organizations in their diversity and other civil society, national and local governments, regional and intergovernmental bodies, development partners and the private sector.

There is strong evidence of the contribution of UN Women's coordination and convening role in advancing the cause of EAWG across regions – including via the Essential Services Programme, Partners for Prevention, Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces, and the Joint Programme on VAWG data. Additionally, the UNITE to End Violence against Women campaign

and Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence are two multi-stakeholder initiatives convened by UN Women bringing together diverse partners to drive progress to end violence against women and girls (see below boxes).

UN Women's role in the UN system's COVID-19 response is another strong example that showcased UN Women's thought leadership, expeditious mobilization of evidence, and strong and cohesive advocacy for action in EAWG acting as a 'global policy entrepreneur'.⁵⁰ This coordination included the facilitation of a UN Inter-agency Working Group on Ending Violence against Women and Girls, with the participation of 14 agencies and funds.

BOX 9

UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women Campaign

Launched in 2008 under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General, the UNiTE campaign was created to support the civil society-led 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Managed by UN Women, UNiTE calls upon governments, civil society, women's organizations, young people, the private sector, media, and the UN system to join forces to address the global pandemic of violence against women and girls. From 25 November to 10 December every year, UNiTE calls on people everywhere to wear the colour orange and take action to end violence against women and girls in communities, at home, in public spaces, in schools and workplaces, during conflict and in times of peace.

In 2022, the UNiTE campaign called for everyone to stand in solidarity with women's rights activists and to support feminist movements around the world to resist the rollback on women's rights. In 2023, the focus was on the need for sustained political commitment from all stakeholders, especially increased funding, particularly in crisis contexts. The campaign has brought 1 million new users to UN Women's corporate website each year during the 16 days and reached about 34 million impressions on social media, with growing numbers and engagement every year.



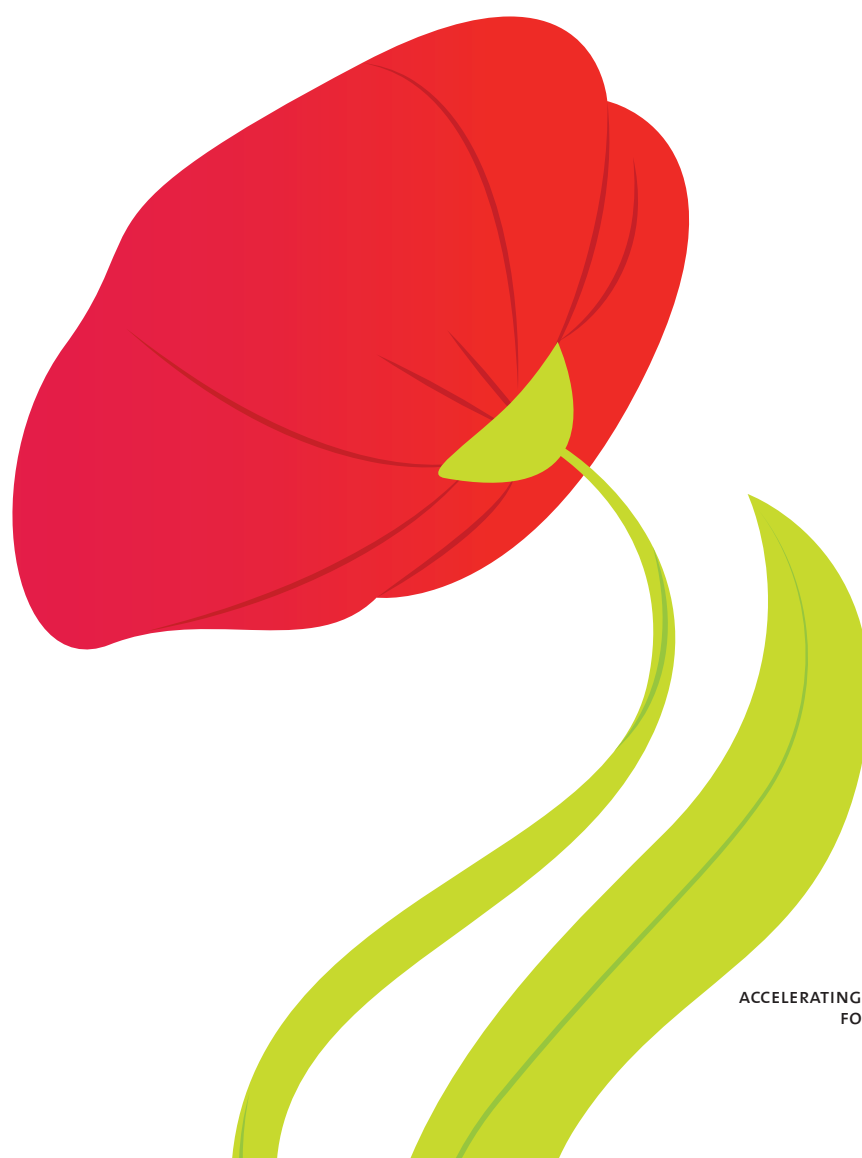
BOX 10

Generation Equality - The power of multi-sectoral partnerships for ending violence against women and girls

Convened by UN Women, Generation Equality seeks to fulfil the ambitions of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and achieve the SDGs, with accelerated investment and action on gender equality and a focus on engaging young people's energy and activism. Launched in 2021 at the Generation Equality Forum, the initiative introduced a 5-year Global Acceleration Plan and established six Action Coalitions, including the Action Coalition on GBV (AC GBV) and a Compact for Women Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS HA). The AC GBV mobilizes governments, civil society, youth organizations, academia, philanthropic organizations and the private sector to foster policy, legal and



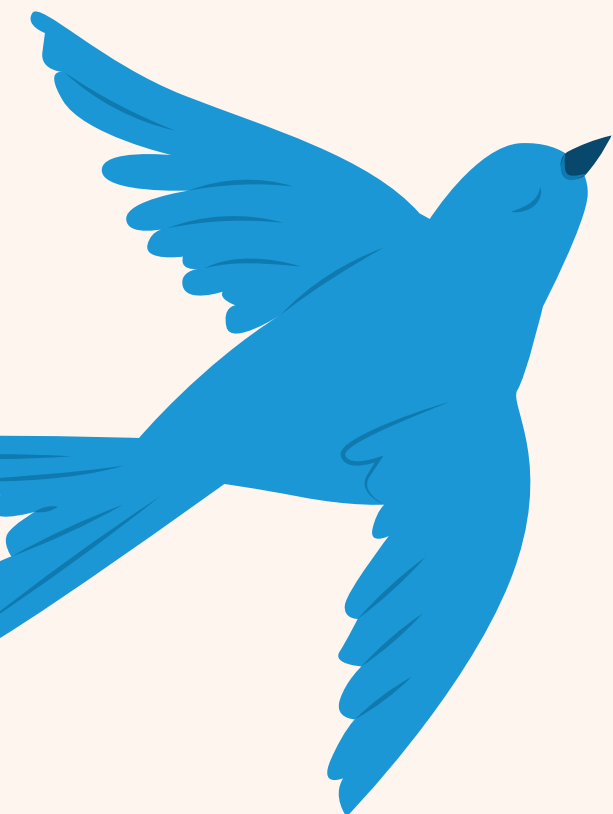
resource changes, scale-up evidence-driven prevention programmes, enhance services for survivors and empower women's rights groups. As both convenor and Commitment Maker, UN Women committed to mobilize USD 400 million by 2026 to end GBV in 25 countries. By 2022, UN Women had allocated USD 92 million to EVAWG, supporting the development and implementation of at least 44 programming initiatives to prevent VAWG across 16 countries. By 2023, according to the Generation Equality Accountability Report, over USD 5.1 billion had been pledged to the AC GBV by various donors. Of this amount, USD 171 million was allocated to supporting civil society and USD 67 million went to programmes for adolescent girls, while a noteworthy investment of USD 1 million was channelled to youth-led organizations. The 2023 Accountability Report also highlighted that half of the secured funds were translated into 389 new policies and 600 programmes initiated or implemented with some 85 per cent of commitments resulting in new partnerships.



3. UN WOMEN'S IMPACT ON ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN 2022 AND 2023

This report focuses on the impact UN Women has had on ending violence against women and girls in 2022 and 2023. This is the first progress report under the 2022–2025 Strategic Plan. Drawing from the work of over 80 country, regional and global offices, UN Women has supported inter-governmental processes, governments, elected representatives, women's

rights organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), women activists, youth-led organizations and networks, the UN system and other partners to accelerate progress on ending VAWG despite the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple crises and a concerted push-back against women's rights.



3.1 Funding landscape for UN Women's ending violence against women and girls programming 2022–2023

UN Women mobilized **USD 228.8 million** for EVAWG initiatives, programming and feminist movement-building across six regions (Americas and the Caribbean, Arab States, Asia Pacific, East and Southern Africa, Europe and Central Asia, and West and Central Africa) from 2022 to 2023.⁵¹ This funding represented more than **one-fourth (28 per cent)** of the

total estimated USD 820 million committed globally to prevent gender-based violence during this period.⁵² Despite this funding for UN Women's EVAWG work, there were still many areas and regions that did not receive adequate funding to effectively address VAWG.

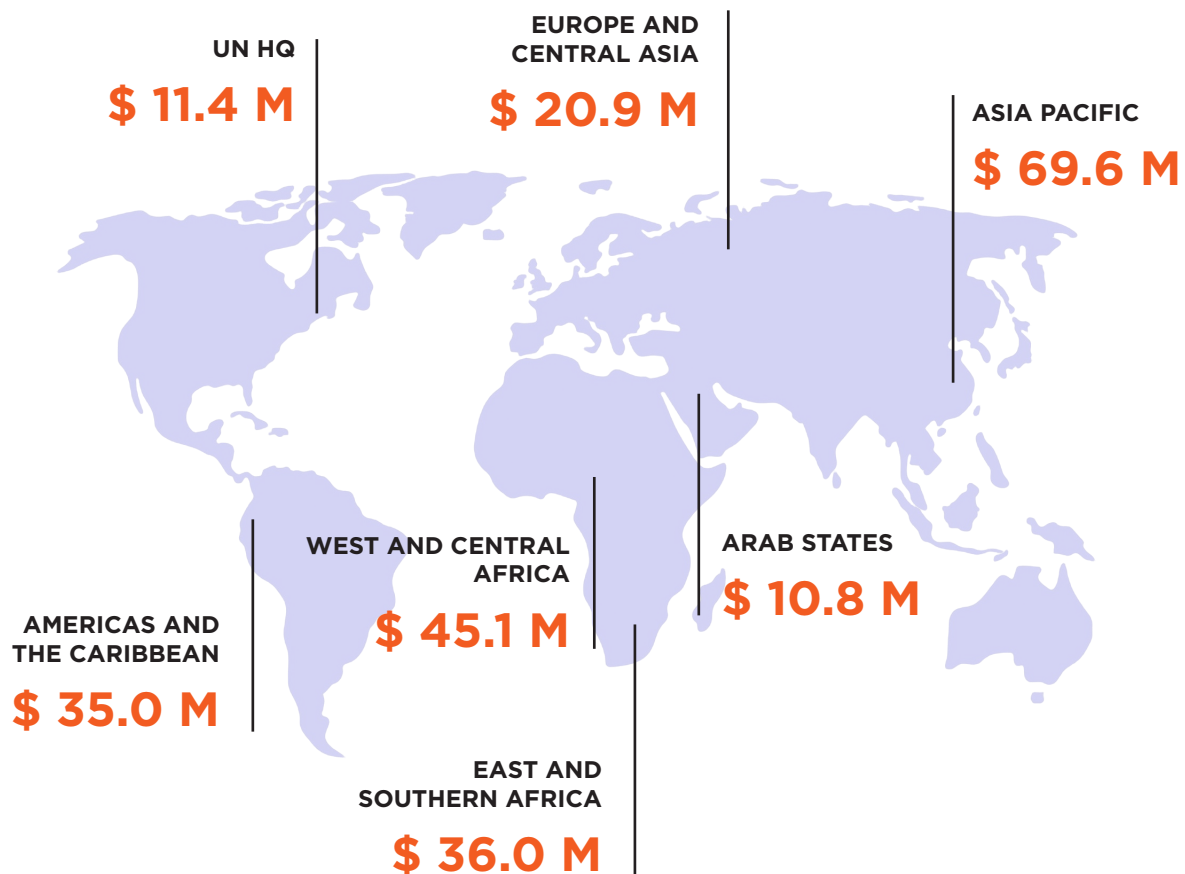


Figure 2: UN Women funding mobilized, by region, 2022 and 2023 (combined)



3.2 Laws & Policies

Informing the development of global normative standards and supporting the implementation of national laws and policies.

International legal and policy frameworks and standards provide the frameworks to end violence against women and girls. Comprehensive legislation is fundamental for an effective and coordinated response to violence against women. States have clear obligations under international law to enact, implement and monitor legislation addressing all forms of violence against women.⁵³ Over the past two decades, at least 193 States have adopted or revised legislation on violence against women.⁵⁴ The impact of such measures is evident, with countries enacting domestic violence laws reporting lower rates of intimate-partner violence (9.5 per cent) compared to those without such legislation (16.1 per cent).⁵⁵ Nonetheless, many States still do not have in place legislative provisions that specifically address violence against women and, even where legislation exists, it is often limited in scope and coverage or is not enforced.

As part of its triple mandate, UN Women has continued to support the development of global normative standards and the full implementation by Member States to of the existing international and regional legal and policy framework on ending violence against women and girls, including the CEDAW Convention and other international and regional human rights treaties, and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and Human Rights Council, through its operational functions and UN system coordination and broader convening role on EVAWG. This work has been informed by solid, evidence-based analysis. In 2022, UN Women drafted the reports of the Secretary-General on: the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women;⁵⁶ intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation;⁵⁷ and on trafficking in women and girls.⁵⁸ Subsequently, UN Women was requested by Member States to provide technical support for the development of a new

General Assembly resolution on international cooperation on access to justice, remedies and assistance for survivors of sexual violence.⁵⁹ UN Women has also continued to support the work of the thematic and country-specific Special Procedures mandate-holders to mainstream gender equality within their mandates and incorporate VAWG as a cross-cutting issue in their thematic or country reporting. UN Women has supported their country visits, such as the visit of the UN Working Group on the Discrimination against Women and Girls to Afghanistan in 2023, as well as their thematic reports and research, and follow-up to their recommendations. UN Women also successfully supported key intergovernmental processes such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). In 2022, UN Women co-developed a policy brief together with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls on “Tackling Violence against Women and Girls in the Context of Climate Change”,⁶⁰ an emerging issue affecting efforts to address VAWG. This year, the Commission addressed *inter alia* the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental challenges on the increase and exacerbation of the vulnerability of women and girls to discrimination and all forms of violence.⁶¹ In 2023, UN Women produced a brief⁶² building on the SG’s report, with recommendations to drive change for the UN system, governments and the technology sector, an observer paper with recommended actions for a preparatory Expert Group Meeting,⁶³ which served as background material for the 67th Session of the CSW and a report on the definition of technology-facilitated violence against women.⁶⁴ This year, both the CSW and the UNSC addressed how innovation and technological change amplified existing forms and created new forms of violence against women and girls.⁶⁵

UN Women also worked with governments, parliamentarians, civil society and other partners to ensure that normative progress at global level was translated into strengthened legal protections against all forms of VAWG, as outlined in the *Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women*.⁶⁶ Laws are essential, and there is evidence of their impact on violence against women and girls as countries with domestic violence legislation have lower rates of intimate partner violence than those without legislation (9.5 per cent, compared to 16.1 per cent).⁶⁷

In addition to strong and comprehensive legal frameworks, UN Women supports the development and implementation of national action plans (NAPs) for

EVAWG that are critical for a coordinated approach to implementing national laws. The Handbook on multi-sectoral national action plans⁶⁸ and the Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls⁶⁹ have been guiding UN Women's work and supporting governments on developing responsive, evidence-based and well-consulted NAPs to prevent violence against women and girls.

In 2022–2023, UN Women advanced legal and policy reforms at country level through advocacy and by facilitating consultations with different stakeholders, providing technical expertise and strengthening the capacities of government sectors.

IN 2022–2023, WITH UN WOMEN'S SUPPORT:



117

LAWS

were adopted, revised or repealed to advance gender equality and women's empowerment with a focus on ending violence against women and girls.



64

MULTI-SECTORAL STRATEGIES ACTION PLANS AND POLICIES

adopted to support EVAWG.



207

INSTITUTIONS

adopted non-discrimination policies with a focus on EVAWG.



8

in 2022 & in 2023

46

NATIONAL PARTNERS

adopted non-discrimination policies with a focus on EVAWG.



16,213

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUES

across 18 countries were organized to promote engagement of governments with civil society and other partners on EVAWG.



3.2.1 Strengthening national laws and policies that focus on ending violence against women and girls

In 2022 and 2023, UN Women collaborated with multiple stakeholders, advocacy groups and CSOs to develop guidelines and protocols that strengthen Member States' policies, advancing comprehensive protections against VAWG through a unified, multi-stakeholder approach.

- In **North Macedonia**, after years of lobbying and collaborative work between the Ministry of Justice, the Working Group for changes to the Criminal Code, think-tanks, CSOs and Parliament, critical amendments to the Criminal Code were adopted in February 2023. As a result of the amendments, the Criminal Code now specifically defines and criminalizes a number of different types of violence, including: femicide (the murder of girls and women), female genital mutilation, stalking and sexual harassment. The changes also expand the definition of sexual violence to include online and non-consensual sexual acts and rape, and the rape of a current or previous spouse or intimate partner. Through the European Union-funded regional programme “Implementing Norms, Changing Minds,” UN Women supported the process through technical working meetings, providing expert advice, organizing discussions with CSOs, and by supporting an awareness-raising campaign for the general public. A significant part of this work included a gap analysis⁷⁰ of the country's commitments under the Istanbul Convention and the provisions of its Criminal Code.

“All these are very important changes in legislation that will – together with the new Law on the Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which was adopted in January 2021 – set the basis for full implementation of the Istanbul Convention and allow for new and better services, increased allocation of resources, protection measures and databases that will allow an analysis of trends to positively transform the discourses around violence that women and girls experience.” —Marija Risteska, Executive Director of the Centre for Research and Policy Making.

- In **Latin America** in 2022, UN Women and MESECVI jointly published *Cyberviolence and cyberharassment against women and girls within the framework of the Belém do Pará Convention*.⁷¹ This report examines the growing issue of technology-facilitated violence and provides actionable recommendations to strengthen legal and policy responses. By aligning with the principles of the Belém do Pará Convention, the publication highlights the urgent need for a regional approach to address the intersection of technology and violence, empowering States to create safer digital environments for women and girls. This publication has been instrumental in the region by naming and explaining diverse forms of violence that emerged and intensified following the pandemic, which have had a growing impact on the lives of women, girls and adolescents. Building on this process, in 2023, UN Women and MESECVI initiated the development of a Model Law on Technology-Facilitated Violence under the framework of the ACT to End Violence Against Women initiative,⁷² aiming to provide States with a robust legislative tool to address these challenges effectively.
- Through the Spotlight Initiative **Africa** Regional Programme, UN Women supported Equality Now to undertake advocacy missions under the Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition to countries that had not yet ratified the Maputo Protocol. UN Women conducted assessments of discriminatory laws in **Mozambique, Kenya, South Africa, South Sudan** and **Uganda**, informing legal reforms. In **Nigeria**, UN Women's interventions accelerated the passage of the landmark of the Violence against Persons' Prohibition (VAPP) Act 2015 with 97 per cent of States having domesticated the law by June 2023 compared to only 25 per cent in 2019. The law strengthens survivors' access to protection orders and compensation that was previously inaccessible through the Penal Code. Four multi-sectoral costed action plans and Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks on implementation of the VAPP Act in Ebonyi, Sokoto, Adamawa and Cross River enabling gender-responsive budgeting for the law.

- Through the Safe and Fair programme, UN Women in partnership with International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNODC, significantly strengthened laws, policies and NAPs to protect women migrant workers from trafficking, exploitation and violence across **Asia**. In the **Philippines**, the programme supported the adoption of key legislation, including the 2022 *Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act* (Republic Act No. 11862) and the *Act Providing Stronger Protection against Rape and Sexual Exploitation* (Republic Act No. 11648). Local measures such as Manila City's Local Council on Anti-Trafficking and VAWG Ordinance and Talisay City's Ordinance establishing Help Desks for

overseas Filipino workers were adopted. In **Thailand**, amendments to the *Damages for the Injured Person Act* enhanced compensation for victims; while in **Viet Nam**, the *Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control* was strengthened in 2022. **Indonesia** adopted the *National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons 2020–2024* and *Local Action Plan on Prevention of Violence against Women and Children* in Bandung District. These initiatives underscore UN Women's role in fostering systemic change, promoting survivor-centred protections, and ensuring safer migration and working conditions for women in the region.

3.2.2 Introducing and strengthening national action plans to improve country-level coordination and implementation of violence against women and girls policies and initiatives

Comprehensive, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches that are supported by dedicated funding, including to women's rights organizations, are the most effective for eliminating VAWG. This requires cross-sectoral approaches, such as integrated strategies on women's economic empowerment, social protection and ending VAWG, with a strong focus on preventing violence by addressing harmful social norms and behaviours.⁷⁴ Between 2022 and 2023, UN Women supported the development of NAPs with a comprehensive VAWG prevention and response strategy.

- In **Trinidad and Tobago**, UN Women national-level interventions led the development and adoption of the National Strategic Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Violence 2023–2027 in June 2023. The Plan is the country's first financed, comprehensive and coordinated VAWG prevention and response strategy. UN Women provided the Government with technical advice, facilitated nationwide consultations, updated the operational strategy, results framework and costing, and provided key inputs into the narrative component.

- **Cambodia** is one of the few countries in the Asia-Pacific region that has successfully implemented a series of National Action Plans (from 2019 to 2023) dedicated to ending violence against women, steadily increasing the ownership among ministries and departments that are essential to comprehensive care, analysis of evidence, trends and patterns to improve response services and the prevention of violence. UN Women's technical assistance to the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Cambodia was instrumental to underscore evidence-based strategies on EVAWG in the NAP, concurrently supporting their implementation and measurement.

“This is only the beginning. I invite other sectors, youth leaders, church leaders, community champions, development partners and stakeholders to work together in a concerted effort and with a coordinated and coherent approach for transformative change in Samoa. Ending violence against women and girls is everyone's responsibility.” —Hon. Leota Laki, Minister of the Ministry of Women, Child and Social Development of Samoa

- In **Fiji**, the adoption of the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against All Women and Girls (2023–2028) was a groundbreaking achievement, positioning Fiji as an EVAWG leader in the Pacific region. UN Women played a pivotal role as the technical partner, working closely with the Government of Fiji to ensure the NAP was comprehensive, evidence-based, and highly consultative. From 2019 to 2022, UN Women facilitated national consultations involving over 2,000 participants, including government representatives, civil society, and community stakeholders, to identify priority areas for prevention and response. These efforts led to an inclusive framework addressing violence in 13 key societal settings, incorporating global best practices while centring on Fiji’s unique cultural and social context.
- In **Samoa**, the development of the National Prevention Framework in 2022 marked a significant step towards reducing VAWG. Building on the lessons learned from Fiji’s National Action Plan Prevent Violence against All Women and Girls, the framework provided a unified strategy to guide annual planning and implementation of prevention efforts. Completed in 2022, the framework supported all the annual planning and delivery efforts to prevent and end all forms of violence that impact women and girls. The framework acted as a useful tool for the police to strategize and design their programmes and contribute to national efforts. One million Samoan Tala were allocated under the national budget to fund all gender-based violence initiatives.

3.2.3 Supporting governments and partners to improve gender-responsive budgets for violence against women and girls policies and laws

In 2022 and 2023, UN Women’s efforts to bolster gender-responsive budgeting included advancing research and analysis to optimize budget allocations and develop methodologies to guide agencies and departments in effective financial planning. UN Women also created tools to address gender as a cross-cutting and intersectional priority in budget plans.

- In 2023, UN Women published the report, *Tracking Measures and Budgets Aimed at Reducing Violence Against Women in the Context of the Pandemic*,⁷³ which provides a detailed analysis of the measures and financial commitments implemented by governments in **Latin America and the Caribbean** during the COVID-19 pandemic to address VAWG. This report highlights the critical role of targeted budgeting and evidence-based policies in mitigating the impacts of the pandemic on women and girls and provides practical recommendations and tools for monitoring resource allocation. In **Colombia**, UN Women provided technical assistance to the National Planning Department in assessing the use of resources for gender equality. The Government integrated gender
- into policies and budgets in 2022 and 2023 by using a gender budget tracer to allocate resources for violence prevention, rural women’s rights, equal labour conditions and pay, and the care economy. The gender budget tracer helped advocate for increased resources in priority areas by identifying low allocations for women and girls’ sexual and reproductive health. This enabled successful advocacy and an increased budget for sexual and reproductive health initiatives.
- In **Zimbabwe**, through the Spotlight Initiative, UN Women’s gender-responsive budgeting guidelines and tracking tools have strengthened the capacity of key senior officials in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and six pilot line ministries to identify gender gaps in their approved budgets for 2022 and develop action plans accordingly. This partnership also contributed to Zimbabwe producing its first-ever gender budget statement for the National Budget.



3.3 Prevention

Strengthening measures to prevent violence against women and girls.

Violence against women and girls is preventable, and prevention remains central to UN Women's work in addressing its root causes, including harmful social norms and unequal gender power dynamics. Risk factors such as limited education, childhood exposure to violence, harmful use of alcohol, and societal attitudes that normalize violence and gender inequality increase the likelihood of experiencing or perpetrating violence against women and girls.⁷⁵ Effective prevention requires mitigating these risk factors while amplifying protective measures such as promoting healthy relationships, fostering gender equality, and creating supportive environments.

UN Women has been instrumental in influencing intergovernmental processes, such as the UN General Assembly⁷⁶ and CSW,⁷⁷ to prioritize VAWG prevention. Together with partners, UN Women has integrated prevention into government agendas through the

development of NAPs and prevention strategies. Foundational documents like the UN Prevention Framework⁷⁸ and the RESPECT framework⁷⁹ have been critical in fostering a shared understanding and a coordinated approach across diverse stakeholders. In 2022 and 2023, UN Women led evidence-based prevention interventions grounded in the RESPECT framework's seven strategic areas.⁸⁰ These initiatives addressed the root causes of VAWG through interconnected strategies, including shifting harmful norms in families, through sports and within institutions; mobilizing communities; engaging men and boys, as well as religious and traditional leaders; supporting women's agency and economic empowerment; and partnering with the private sector to ensure safe workplaces and communities where women and girls can thrive free from violence.

IN 2022-2023, WITH UN WOMEN'S SUPPORT:



17

COUNTRIES

developed, designed or implemented VAWG prevention action plans or strategies.



113 94
in 2022 & in 2023

ORGANIZATIONS

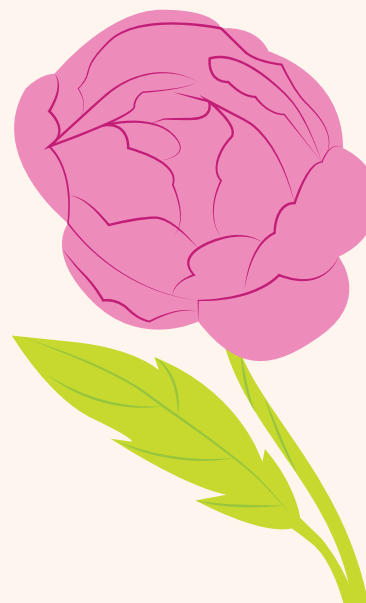
increased their capacities to address gender-based discrimination and or social/gender norms in their organizational culture.



68

PROGRAMMES

across 29 countries addressed harmful social and gender norms at the community and organization levels, using evidence-based and practice-based methodologies.



3.3.1 Transforming social norms

Shifting harmful social norms is essential to preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG). Social norms, which shape shared beliefs about acceptable behaviour, often perpetuate gender inequality and justify violence. However, these norms are not static—they can be shifted by fostering gender-equitable attitudes, promoting respectful relationships, and addressing the structural inequalities that underpin violence.

UN Women's efforts to transform harmful norms are comprehensive, addressing individuals, families, communities, and institutions. In 2022–2023, these initiatives targeted the root causes of VAWG through interventions that engaged men and boys, religious and traditional leaders, institutions, and broader societal structures.

- Oceania Rugby and UN Women have been implementing the Get into Rugby Plus (GIR+) programme in schools in **Fiji** and **Samoa** to address VAWG through sport as a tool to promote positive, gender-equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours. The program engaged 629 children (59% girls), equipping them with life skills, fostering respectful relationships, and promoting gender equality. Coaches (50% women and 50% men) became agents of change for non-violence. In Samoa, behaviors promoting gender equality and healthy relationships doubled or tripled, with all participants recognizing the Child Helpline as a key resource for violence prevention.

- In **Kyrgyzstan**, UN Women through the Spotlight Initiative, championed the implementation of the innovative Gender Action Learning System (GALS) training to reduce violence by addressing unhealthy power dynamics within families and communities. Over 2,500 women and 1,600 men participated in sessions in the Chui and Naryn provinces. Educational institutions integrated gender-transformative materials into university curricula, reaching 100 students (59 girls and 41 boys). Families reported improved communication and equitable labor distribution, empowering women and increasing family income by 50%.

“Using the GALS methodology, my husband Rakhat and I saw visually how the tree of our family looked, and it was not very beautiful in terms of distribution of household labour, family budget and decision-making. We both work 40 hours a week, but he used to come home from work and lie on the couch watching TV, while I was responsible for doing all the housework in the evenings. Unfortunately, it is acceptable behaviour in our country... The atmosphere in our family has improved a lot with better communication and a more equal distribution of family chores. It gave me some time to make my dream come true and open my own business, which has increased our family income by 50 per cent.” —Almambet Kyzy, Programme participant in Kyrgyzstan

3.3.2 Engaging men and boys to promote positive masculinities

Alongside women and girls, men and boys play a critical role in challenging harmful gender norms and adopting equitable behaviors. In 2022–2023, UN Women supported initiatives that engaged men and boys through peer education, open dialogues, and community-based programs, fostering safe spaces to reflect on and reshape traditional notions of masculinity.

- In the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, programs promoting positive masculinities in Kinshasa, Goma, and Bukavu contributed to a 30% reduction in domestic violence. Community-based initiatives reached over 15,000 participants, with men and boys becoming vocal advocates for shared decision-making and

respectful relationships. The DRC hosted the first Positive Masculinity conference, resulting in the Kinshasa Declaration, which outlined commitments to prevent VAWG and promote gender equality across Africa.

- In **Malawi**, UN Women's Spotlight Initiative interventions resulted in 94 SGBV cases being reported and 96 girls rescued from child marriages and supported to return to school. Efforts across six target districts promoted positive masculinities among 525 men and boys using the HeForShe Barbershop Toolkit and referral systems. Toolbox dialogue sessions educated 3,084 men and boys and 347 religious

leaders on women's rights, gender laws, and sexual and reproductive health. Community sensitization through 18 awareness meetings strengthened collaboration between Child Protection Workers, Chiefs Forums, and Mother Groups. To address harmful practices like sexual cleansing, 16 pastors, sheikhs, and 531 HeForShe champions were trained in male engagement and positive masculinity. These advocates formed clubs and groups, engaging 1,989 community leaders and 18,355 members in 21 awareness sessions.

- In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, UN Women partnered with the Behavioural Insights Team to explore how behavioural science could engage men in preventing VAWG. This collaboration combined a review of behavioural science literature, research on VAWG, and interviews to identify target behaviours, barriers, and actionable recommendations, resulting in a qualitative study on behaviourally informed strategies to engage men. Building on these

findings, UN Women developed a model campaign to engage bystanders in preventing online violence against women and girls, applying behavioural science to promote proactive intervention and foster safer online spaces.

- In **Central Asia**, UN Women, through the Spotlight Initiative, supported the development of National Action Plans (NAPs) in five countries following a regional workshop with 57 participants. The workshop presented a situational analysis, regional strategy, and communication plan to mobilize men and boys to eliminate VAWG, leading to tailored NAPs. During the 16 Days of Activism, UN Women launched the first HeForShe Central Asia campaign, reaching over 10,000 people in its initial weeks and emphasizing the role of men and boys in challenging stereotypes and fostering healthy masculinity. These efforts significantly advanced regional gender equality and violence prevention initiatives.

3.3.3 Strengthening the engagement and advocacy of religious leaders and traditional actors

Faith-based and traditional actors, such as religious leaders, chiefs, traditional healers, elders, and mothers-in-law, play a pivotal role in preventing VAWG by shaping social norms and practices. While they can promote positive change, they may also perpetuate harmful norms that legitimize violence. In 2022 and 2023, UN Women engaged religious leaders to address GBV and advance gender equality through regional dialogues, capacity-building, and partnerships with religious coalitions and networks, leveraging their influence to foster transformative social change.

- UN Women's partnership with the **Pacific** Council of Churches resulted in a 1,700% increase in prevention interventions by faith communities. In 2022, the Gender Status Card for Churches in the Pacific was developed, marking a milestone in assessing gender equality in churches. The "One Voice: Break the Silence Sunday" campaign mobilized faith leaders to speak against GBV, while the House-of-Sarah-led intervention in Fiji recorded reduced gender stereotypes and improved equitable behaviors through SASA Faith assessments.
- In **Africa**, UN Women collaborated with traditional and religious leaders to dissolve thousands of child marriages, ban FGM and harmful widowhood rites,

and establish shelters for survivors. Through the Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa (COTLA), cultural change efforts have tackled child marriage, FGM, and domestic violence. Notably, in **Malawi**, COTLA's partnership with police and community groups led to the dissolution of 1,893 child marriages. In **Kenya**, COTLA's Steering Committee discussed strategies against VAWG, while in **Liberia**, efforts by UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Jaha Dukureh contributed to a Seven County Policy banning FGM. Similar progress was achieved in **Mozambique, Cameroon, Niger, and Sierra Leone**, where leaders formalized collaborations to protect women and girls.

- Additionally, COTLA pledged to promote gender equality through the Generation Equality Forum, while UN Women supported the launch of partnership guidelines with the African Union Commission and facilitated dialogue sessions on positive masculinities at the AU Conference.

"Young girls are not supposed to be carrying babies but are supposed to be in school, and we must do all that we can to ensure that it happens." —Chief Chamuka, Traditional leader, Zambia

3.3.4 Supporting institutional norms change

Institutions play a pivotal role in shaping the social norms and beliefs that influence behaviour. Addressing deeply rooted gender-inequitable practices within organizational structures is essential to fostering safe and equitable environments. By challenging harmful norms, promoting gender-equitable policies, and strengthening institutional capacity, workplaces, schools, and other systems can actively contribute to preventing VAWG. UN Women's initiatives in 2022-2023 have worked to transform institutional settings by building knowledge, improving practices, and embedding sustainable frameworks that ensure zero tolerance for violence and discrimination, including by leveraging the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)⁸² to promote gender-responsive practices across workplaces, marketplaces, and communities.

- In **Honduras**, UN Women strengthened the capacities of 60 representatives from CSOs, local governments, Chambers of Commerce, private companies, and the justice sector to identify, prevent, and respond to workplace VAWG in two municipalities prioritized by the Spotlight Initiative in 2022. Training sessions addressed the influence of gender roles on labour market dynamics, workplace violence, and women's rights, equipping participants with strategies to address and sanction violence. To ensure sustainability, UN Women developed an online-adapted course and a comprehensive training manual, which continues to support gender equality and workplace safety.
- In Assam, **India**, a women's health and safety programme, supported by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), addressed the interconnections between health, safety, and wellness in the tea sector during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following targeted capacity-strengthening, producers from 10 tea estates implemented measures promoting women's health, safety, and access to services, focusing on sexual and reproductive health, menstrual health, nutrition, anaemia, and mental health. Community mobilizers engaged regularly with industry, government, women workers, and partners in tea gardens, advancing well-being and safety for women in rural areas.

- In **Guyana**, UN Women supported 13 private sector companies in adopting the WEPs, with three companies implementing paternity leave policies following advocacy and awareness efforts. Gender Gap Analyses and Gender Action Plans were developed for all 13 companies to address workplace gender inequality and the impacts of family violence. Eight companies produced awareness videos on domestic violence policies and paternity leave, resulting in gender-responsive workplace practices. By the end of 2022, UN Women had sensitized three additional companies on WEPs and engaged eight more in the adoption process.
- In **Nigeria**, between 2022 and 2023, WEPs signatories increased by 70% due to UN Women's efforts through the Spotlight Initiative. This led to the creation of a Private Sector GBV Fund, designed to support 10,000 survivors of SGBV with case management services and provide 50,000 at-risk women and girls with second-chance initiatives to improve resilience and prevent violence. These efforts also encouraged more private sector signatories to develop gender equality plans, furthering commitments to gender-responsive practices.

3.3.5 Fostering community mobilization

Community mobilization complements efforts to transform harmful norms by fostering collective accountability and empowering local actors to drive prevention initiatives. It builds on norms transformation by engaging entire communities to take ownership of the VAWG prevention agenda, ensuring interventions are culturally relevant, evidence-based, and sustainable. By working directly with communities in 2022-2023, UN Women has supported efforts to

dismantle structural inequalities and promote positive change at individual, family, and societal levels.

- UN Women coordinated the roll-out of the RESPECT Framework in **Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda** and **Zimbabwe** in 2022, in collaboration with the Prevention Collaborative, UNFPA and WHO. Sessions on RESPECT with key stakeholders in these countries aimed at building a shared understanding of evidence-based prevention practices.

- In **Uganda**, UN Women supported the expansion of the SASA!⁸¹ Together model in several communities working with the CSOs Communication for Development Foundation Uganda (CDFU) and UGANET. The initiative equipped over 1,500 community leaders, community activists and champions for the SASA! Together Awareness Phase, who then conducted community mobilization activities. The initiative is being expanded to other locations and has contributed to the design of an institutional approach to SASA! being piloted with the judiciary.
- In **Kiribati**, UN Women implemented the Strengthening Peaceful Village programme, an adaptation of SASA! Together, to address harmful attitudes and norms about GBV and promote gender equality. Over 1,200 community activities were conducted across 21 communities in Tarawa and Betio villages. A 2023 evaluation revealed significant progress, including reduced household violence, increased support for women and children experiencing violence, and improved knowledge and practices at individual, family, and community levels, driven by village leaders and community mobilizers.

3.3.6 Strengthening women's agency and economic empowerment

Poverty increases risk factors for intimate partner violence, ill-health, reduced educational opportunities and household stress. In 2022 and 2023, UN Women strengthened women's agency and economic empowerment through initiatives focused on expanding access to resources and skills, engaging the private sector, and enabling women and girls to access economic opportunities. These programmes supported at-risk women, GBV survivors and former practitioners of harmful practices in regaining control over their lives and contributing to their households and communities.

- In **Bolivia**, 120 women waste-pickers from women's associations in the cities of La Paz and El Alto now know how to assert their rights to safe public spaces after participating in a Safe Cities Programme. Women recyclers face numerous threats as they complete their work, ranging from sexual harassment and other forms of violence to exposure to hazardous materials. Their work often takes place on streets after dark and is informal. Women waste-pickers are often disrespected, and their work is often undervalued – attitudes that are being challenged and transformed through public awareness-raising, community mobilization and capacity-strengthening for women recyclers in violence prevention, climate change and economic empowerment. This action is further embedded within the Government's 'Sustainable Schools' initiative, whereby women recyclers have trained 1,120 teachers from 70 municipal schools how to properly recycle and take measures to increase women's safety in public spaces, with a goal of reaching 25,000 students over time. The

programme has identified key private and public sector partners who can purchase the recyclable materials and also provide support for repurposing materials with a view to increasing skills and diversifying the income of women recyclers.

- In **Liberia**, at least 50 former FGM practitioners (referred to as 'Zoes') in Naio Town have abandoned the practice after participating in UN Women's training on the elimination of FGM through land cultivation skills-strengthening under the Spotlight Initiative in 2023. The Zoes planted and grew various crops, such as pepper, bitter ball, cassava, yam, rice and banana. Their farming activities yielded success and satisfaction and have provided them with an income to replace that they received by performing FGM. UN Women also facilitated community dialogues and provided resources for sustainable livelihoods, ensuring that the women could maintain their independence and continue advocating against FGM. The programme has been instrumental in transforming the lives of these Zoes in their communities and in reshaping social norms to say no to FGM.

"This training was like a church delivering me from bondage. I realized that FGM was detrimental, and I regretted my involvement in it. The knowledge and understanding I gained awakened me to the reality [of FGM]." —Yaoh, a former FGM practitioner



3.4 Response

Strengthening responses to violence against women and girls through increased access to improved essential services for all survivors.

Women and girls who have experienced violence require timely access to quality comprehensive services provided by several sectors, such as clinical health care, legal protection, safe shelter and counselling. Quality survivor services reduce the impact of the harms suffered, aid in short- and longer-term recovery and have the potential to mitigate further incidents of violence.⁸³ However, research shows that most women and girls who experience violence do not seek such help. A recent study using data from 31 low- to middle-income countries found that overall, less than 5 per cent of women who reported experiencing intimate partner violence sought help from formal services.⁸⁴

Obstacles preventing women and girls from accessing quality, culturally sensitive and age-appropriate sectoral services include a lack of knowledge of available services, survivors' fear of reporting due to the stigma of victimization, as well as the often-high cost of services, if they are paid for by the survivor. Even where services are available, the lack of coordination between different sectors can mean they fail to provide meaningful and relevant support to abused women and girls.

UN Women's efforts have significantly advanced the response to VAWG at the global, regional, country and community levels. Under the Joint Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, UN Women, in partnership with UNFPA, UNODC, WHO and UNDP, developed, promoted and implemented the Essential Services Package for

Women and Girls Subject to Violence,⁸⁵ the first-ever guidance based on agreed-on global standards for a package of minimum comprehensive services for VAWG survivors in health, policing/justice, social services and the coordination of these services. In addition to providing guidance on coordination and essential actions to be taken by different sectors, the ESP also outlines the enabling environment needed to support the implementation of essential services and provides guidance on estimating resource requirements for a minimum package of services. This is complemented by guidance developed by UN Women and partners on engaging survivors of VAWG safely and strengthening police responses to VAWG crimes during 2021–2022.

In 2022 and 2023, UN Women supported Member States to improve the availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of essential services for VAWG survivors, by working to scale up survivor services aligned with international standards, through promoting the ESP and related guidance; strengthen the coordination of services; strengthen justice and policing services; expand social services, in addition to strengthening the enabling legislative and policy environment; and conduct data and research-related activities to support VAWG responses, in both development and humanitarian country contexts. UN Women's commitment to integrating the 'leave no-one behind' principle into its interventions has ensured that programming considers the needs of all women and girls, including those most marginalized.

FROM 2022–2023, WITH UN WOMEN'S SUPPORT:



39

COUNTRIES

developed and/or implemented guidelines, protocols and standard operating procedures to improve EAWG services in line with the Essential Services Package.



770 **610**
in 2022 & in 2023

NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

along with CSOs and private institutions in 49 countries, strengthened their capacities to improve the provision of essential services, goods and resources for women who had experienced some form of GBV.



44

COUNTRIES

saw an increase in the number of women who access services after experiencing violence or discrimination.



More specifically through the Essential Services Programme, in 2022–2023:



SCALE UP SERVICES

55 countries scaled-up essential services, aligned with international standards.

- 23 countries integrated LNOB into guidelines, tools and protocols.
- 26 humanitarian or crisis context countries established, strengthened or scaled up.



JUSTICE AND POLICING SERVICES

66 countries shifted towards justice and policing services that are gender-responsive and women-centred.

- 14 countries integrated LNOB principles.
- 13 humanitarian or crisis context countries strengthened these services.



COORDINATION OF SERVICES

54 countries strengthened the coordination of services

- 24 countries established or strengthened coordination mechanisms.
- 11 countries developed or strengthened national/subnational referral systems.
- 8 countries provided access to coordinated services by establishing one-stop or other service models.
- 14 countries integrated LNOB into these coordination efforts.
- 24 humanitarian or crisis context countries strengthened the coordination of services.



QUALITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

24 countries improved the quality of social service provision for VAWG survivors.

- 6 countries integrated LNOB into these interventions.
- 11 humanitarian or crisis context countries implementing these interventions.

3.4.1 Implementing international standards through the development of guidance, assessments and tools adapted at global, regional and country levels

UN Women has helped transform global, regional and national responses to VAWG by promoting a shared understanding of the needs and requirements of all women and girls living in both development and humanitarian nexus contexts. UN Women has developed guidelines and tools for global and regional levels and supported countries to adopt and adapt guidance for the establishment or strengthening of essential services.

- The guidance on *Safe consultations with survivors of violence against women and girls*⁸⁶ was launched **globally** in 2022 to help incorporate survivor voices and inputs into policies, practices and procedures on responding to VAWG, in both development and HDP nexus contexts. Together with Global Rights for Women, the guidance provides practical steps, measures, and actions that government agencies, CSOs and UN entities can implement to safely and ethically incorporate survivors' voices into systemic reform efforts, through safe and meaningful consultations.
- In the **Asia and the Pacific** region, UN Women and the eSafety Commissioner of Australia co-organized a Learning Series on Addressing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in 2023, in partnership with 213 EVAWG advocates and practitioners. This programme raised awareness of how technology can be used by perpetrators as an extension of domestic and intimate partner violence and strengthened frontline service-providers' capacities to better and safely support survivors using technology. In addition, a regional platform of experts was established of 29 practitioners from 17 countries from across the region. These experts also strengthened their capacities on providing survivor-centred and trauma-informed responses to TF GBV. As a result, these experts were able to strengthen the capacities of their respective institutions by replicating the training with their peers and updating their internal resources and procedures such as risk assessments and safety plannings and by ensuring that emergency hotlines/helplines are responsive to TF GBV cases and offer survivor-centred and inclusive services.
- In **Greece**, UN Women, together with the NGO BiaStop and the Gender Secretariat, developed the *Hellenic Risk Assessment Tool* in 2022–2023 to ensure women and girls' safety and reduce their risk of revictimization. This risk assessment tool measures the threat to life and threat to re-offend and is unique in that it is designed to be implemented by all front-line responders (medical, police and justice, social services), compared with the more traditional risk assessment tool that is often used by national police and justice sectors only. In its report to Greece (14 November 2023), the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence responsible for monitoring implementation of the Istanbul Convention (GREVIO), noted with interest the development of this risk-assessment tool, and expressed hope "*that this new tool will shortly be available and implemented and that it will help the authorities to provide women victims of violence with effective protection meeting the requirements of Article 51 of the convention*".⁸⁷
- In **Latin America**, UN Women has provided both technical and financial support to facilitate the adoption and adaptation of the *Latin American Model Protocol for the Investigation of Gender-Related Killings of Women (Femicide/Feminicide)*⁸⁸ in **Uruguay, Colombia, Paraguay and Chile**, tailoring its application to each country's specific legal and institutional frameworks. In **Ecuador**, a National Protocol for Investigating Femicides and other Violent Deaths of Women and Girls was established in collaboration with the State Attorney General's Office (FGE) and structured evidence collection and facilitated the analysis necessary for conviction. It also streamlined investigative procedures and ensured comprehensive reparation for victims. Through Resolution No.066-FGE-2021, the FGE formally validated and mandated the protocol's immediate implementation across the nation for prosecutors and administrative staff. In 2022, training modules, coordinated with the FGE's Training Directorate, were validated to promote continued capacity-building and by the end of the year 113 prosecutors had received training.

3.4.2 Reshaping how policing and justice organizations conceptualize, plan, practise and provide services to all women and girls who have experienced violence

UN Women has made considerable investment working to shift justice and policing practices towards being more gender-responsive and woman-centred. A third of the Entity's overall work on response is in the justice and policing sector. This shift is being felt in countries, regions and globally, particularly in activities related to the development and rollout of *The Handbook on Gender-Responsive Policing Services for Women and Girls subject to Violence*.⁹⁰ In 2022–2023, UN Women supported the development, promotion and implementation of regional and national guidelines, capacity-strengthening and other efforts that expanded the availability of gender-responsive policing and justice services.

- In **Bangladesh**, UN Women supported the Dhaka Metropolitan Police-run Victim Support Centre, staffed entirely by women professionals (police, lawyers, counsellors, doctors) to increase its number of centres to nine across the country. In addition, UN Women helped develop a Strategic Plan for the Bangladesh Police Women Network to guide the provision of gender-responsive services through the establishment of VAWG helpdesks in police stations. Help desks have a separate room and are staffed with trained women officers and address the needs of vulnerable women, including elderly women and those women with disabilities. As of 2022, every one of the 500+ police stations in Bangladesh were required to have such a help desk.
- In **Ukraine**, UN Women supported the Association of Women's Lawyers of Ukraine, (JurFem), to provide legal assistance to survivors of domestic violence. After the Russian invasion in 2022, JurFem's phone lines quickly became inundated with reports of sexual violence. JurFem partnered with UN Women to launch the initiative "JurFem: Support", which helps

VAWG survivors access justice services, as well as emergency medical and psychological care, shelter, safe accommodation and other essential services in Ukraine.

- In 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding was concluded between UN Women and the Government of **Chile** to formalize UN Women's technical assistance role in incorporating gender equality in the public security reform process. In 2023, two Methodological Guides for gender mainstreaming in two police institutions – the Carabineros de Chile, and the Policía de Investigaciones – were approved in early 2024 and sent for review and approval. In addition, the Latin American Protocol for the Judicial Investigation of Gender-Related Killings of Women was adapted and implemented by the Public Prosecutor's Office, and the adapted protocol now considers intersectionality in judicial investigations.

"The violence against women and girls that denies a woman's agency cannot be neglected... Justice must be restored so this never happens again." —Hrystyna Kit, co-founder of JurFem

- In 2023, UN Women partnered **globally** with the International Association of Women Police (IAWP) and the University of Nebraska to convene a Gender-Responsive Policing Summit sharing successful efforts to improve the recruitment, retention, promotion and wellness of women in policing. A peer-reviewed publication also resulted from the Summit.⁹¹

3.4.3 Strengthened coordination of essential services across sectors

Women and girls who experience violence require a diverse set of services that are delivered by different sectors, such as health, justice, policing and social services. A coordinated response by these sectors is required and mechanisms or systems are needed to ensure that survivors are able to access a comprehensive set of services. The most effective coordinated multisectoral services are those which are integrated

to provide a streamlined response to women and girls who have experienced and reported violence. This means that, regardless of the point of entry, women and girls should receive the same standard of service-delivery, which should have a common understanding of women and girls' experience based on the context in which violence occurs, a common understanding and approach to the identification of ongoing risk and

the management of such risks, and a way for the integrated service system to provide ongoing safety and protection.

In 2022–2023, UN Women advanced the coordination of survivor services by supporting the establishment or strengthening of: 1) national and local coordination mechanisms or bodies that include representatives from multiple sectors and service-delivery organizations, including CSOs; and/or 2) national or local referral systems or networks that connect all types of survivor-focused service-provision; and/or 3) one-stop or similar centres that house multiple types of service-providers in one space.

“One challenge in approaching gender-based violence is the need to ensure a multidisciplinary response, and this involves active leadership. The service launched is part of a complex process and I hope it is a model that we will be able to replicate all across the country.” —Alexei Buzu, Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Moldova

- *Coordination mechanisms:* In **Nigeria**, UN Women strengthened several State-level coordination mechanisms that involved all relevant EAWG stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society and other front-line service-providers. This State coordination mechanism ensured the representation and meaningful participation of the Network of Women with Disabilities and the Association of Women with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria in addressing barriers to accessing services.
- *Referral networks:* UN Women supported the establishment of the SAFENET network of governmental and non-government organizations in the **Solomon Islands** and **Kiribati** that provide services in these two island nations and continues to support activities designed to strengthen and maintain this network. SAFENET streamlines assistance by providing direct services, support and referrals to other service-providers, using an agreed-on, safe and coordinated protocol.
- *One-stop service model:* In **Moldova**, UN Women led the collaborative process to establish the first-ever Centre for Specialist Services for sexual violence survivors. The centre provides immediate medical care, trauma support, forensic examinations and psychological assistance for survivors. The Centre’s day-to-day operations, its Regulatory Framework and Operations Manual for all professionals involved in the multidisciplinary response to cases of sexual violence are fully aligned with national legislation and the Istanbul Convention.

3.4.4 Expanding access to quality violence against women and girls survivor services in the social services sector for the immediate and long-term needs of survivors, aligned with global standards

UN Women works extensively in the social services sector, with interventions that are also included under coordination, as noted above, for example, the development of referral networks and one-stop service models, which are often run by social service sector organizations.

- In **Viet Nam**, UN Women played a key role in supporting the development of essential standard operating procedures (SOPs) to enhance coordinated services for survivors of violence and human trafficking. This resulted in the adoption of SOPs by the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs for diplomats, the Ministry of Public Security for frontline public security officials, and the Viet Nam Women’s Union for its members. Additionally, a specialized SOP was developed for hotline staff assisting survivors overseas. These frameworks, adopted between 2022 and 2023, significantly strengthen the country’s capacity to provide timely, effective and survivor-centred support, showcasing UN Women’s impact in improving protection and response mechanisms for vulnerable women and girls.

- In 2022, UN Women, together with the Global Network of Women's Shelters (GNWS), supported the development and launch of Lila.help,⁸⁹ which, **globally**, has become the foremost helpline directory of its kind, providing accessible and trustworthy information on helplines for women and girls who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing violence. Over 60 UN Women regional and country offices provided vital helpline and shelter information from around the world for inclusion in the directory, all of which was checked beforehand to ensure it was safe and reliable. By 2023, the initiative was available in 15 languages and had vetted 267 organizations from an initial 18 in 2022 and expanded to over 100 countries, from an initial six countries. Through the Generation Equality Gender-Based Violence Action Coalition Platform, GNWS successfully leveraged a partnership with ACCOR, a private hospitality group, which provided additional support to the development of the directory to further strengthen available information and resources for the Southeast Asia region.

"Violence impacts many women around the world. But if women can quickly find information on where to seek help and receive specialized care from trustworthy service-providers, that can be a game-changer to minimize the consequences of violence." —Margarita Guille, Coordinator of the Inter-American Network of Women Shelters, a regional partner of the GNWS

- In 2022, the UN Women Multi-Country Office in **Fiji** supported the development and implementation of guidelines and an accountability system to improve service-provision for women and girls who experience violence in the Pacific region. The Code of Ethics and Practice Standards for Domestic Violence Counselling was developed in **Kiribati** in line with ESP standards and provides ethical guidelines for registered domestic violence counsellors and organizations providing counselling services for survivors. In addition, the Kiribati National Domestic Violence Counselling Register Guidelines for the Domestic Violence Counselling Register provides an up-to-date public record of domestic violence counsellors who meet the Government's recommended minimum quality standards. These standards cover counselling competencies, supervision and a contractual commitment to the Code of Ethics and Practice Standards.

"The provision of counselling services tailored to the needs of GBV/EVAWG survivors living with or escaping from violence is a critical area of support and is an essential service." —Livai Sovau, alternate to the Chair of the Regional Working Group on Domestic Violence/Family Protection Legislation

- In 2023, UN Women supported youth-led innovation in **West and Central Africa** through the "Stop GBV Hackathon," which engaged young people from across West and Central Africa to design locally driven solutions for combating VAW with a special focus on digital violence. As a result, the International Youth Action Against Violence Against Women initiative was created, which delivers real-world impact through an integrated and secure digital platform. This platform facilitates efficient reporting, survivor support services and capacity-building programmes, while advancing awareness campaigns and strategic partnerships to combat violence against women more effectively.



3.5 Research & Data

Filling methodological and data gaps to inform evidence-based policies and programming.

Gathering data and evidence on VAWG is vital for gaining insight into the scope, nature, severity and frequency of the different forms of violence experienced by women globally. This data can also help to shed light on who is at highest risk, identify perpetrators, locate hotspots, and reveal the myriad consequences of this violence for individuals, families, communities and societies. This evidence also helps to understand whether survivors can access existing support services. To get a full picture, UN Women supports the production of quality data from different sources to track progress against the SDGs, including prevalence survey data, administrative data, policy data, qualitative data and innovative methods and sources such as big data and remote data collection.

In 2022 and 2023, UN Women supported institutions, governments, CSOs and academics to analyse, use

and disseminate high-quality statistics and evidence on VAWG by working to increase capacities for the production of quality, comparable prevalence data on VAWG to track SDG progress; strengthen knowledge and data on femicides to support prevention and response interventions; increase the capacities of institutions to collect, analyse, use and disseminate high-quality administrative data on VAWG; and advance innovations to fill critical data gaps on VAWG.

UN Women's work on data and research also includes managing a comprehensive repository on government actions to address VAWG: the Global Database on Violence against Women. One of UN Women's most popular portals, it receives more than half a million visitors a year.

IN 2022-2023, WITH UN WOMEN'S SUPPORT:



10 **9**
in 2022 & in 2023

INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION MECHANISMS

established or strengthened on gender-disaggregated data, with a focus on violence against women data.



32
**DATA-COLLECTION
INITIATIVES**

conducted on violence against women and girls.



21
COUNTRIES

strengthened their capacities on measuring and collecting violence against women prevalence data through women's machineries and national statistical offices.



3.5.1 Increased capacities for the production of quality, comparable prevalence data on violence against women to track progress on the SDGs

UN Women's approach to data production lies in a partnership model with national and local institutions to ensure soundness and ownership of the data. Following that approach, UN Women implemented a strategy to build the capacities of national and local institutions to collect violence against women prevalence data in line with globally agreed standards. The objective is to help solve the challenge of overreliance on external expertise and improve sustained capacities to implement surveys in new countries as well as repeat surveys over time in countries that have already implemented previous surveys. The capacity-building strategy also aimed to strengthen capacities to fill data gaps, notably on VAWG based on intersectoral discrimination.

- UN Women and the WHO's Joint Programme on Violence against Women Data implemented a capacity-strengthening strategy in the **Arab States** and **East and Southern Africa**, two of the world's regions where data on intimate-partner violence and non-partner sexual violence are least available. In 2022, two strategic partnerships, with the Arab Institute for Women at the Lebanese American University in a consortium with the Global Women's Institute at the George Washington University, and with the African Population and Health Research Center in a consortium with the University of Ghana, produced and tested regionally tailored courses to enhance in-country capacities and resources on VAWG prevalence data. Across the two regions, 46 researchers and national statistical offices, governmental and civil society representatives from 18 countries actively participated in the first pilot courses that will be embedded in the institutions' curriculums.⁹⁵ These courses are considered the first sustainable subcontinent-wide capacity-strengthening initiatives on VAWG prevalence data that are developed and owned by local research and training institutes.

"Prior to the training, my capacity to conduct surveys was very limited and I also believed that VAW data were exaggerated. But the training changed my previous views on VAW data, and the modules are very practical and useful in ensuring effective data management of VAW prevalence in the African context. I would not hesitate to recommend the training to others working to end VAW." —Jeremiah Wandili, Executive Director at the Wote Initiative for Development Empowerment in Tanzania

- In 2022, UN Women's Nepal Country Office led a consortium of international, national and local partners in conducting a study on violence against LGBTIQ+ people in **Nepal**. The study is particularly notable for highlighting how vulnerability to and experiences with violence are exacerbated along intersectional lines. The use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods and engagement with those representing not only LGBTIQ+ but also specifically youth, Indigenous groups, and other specific ethnicities and castes, was critical. Through a mixed-methods approach that included a national survey, key informant interviews, and a legal and policy analysis, the study was able to illuminate how experiences with (and impacts of) violence may differ for lesbian Dalit women as opposed to Muslim trans men, for example. The study tethers its findings to recommendations for tailored violence prevention and response programmes and policies that take into account how factors that include, but are not necessarily limited to, caste, ethnicity, socio-economic status and disability, shape experiences with violence.

"It is important ... that we do not leave [these people] behind, as the SDGs say. It is their right to be counted." —Keshab Gautam, Director of the Population Section at Nepal's Central Bureau of Statistics

3.5.2 Strengthened knowledge and data on femicides to support prevention and response interventions

Femicide/feminicide, or gender-related killings of women and girls, are the most extreme and brutal manifestation of VAWG and rates remain consistently high across the world. Femicide is however, underdetected and often not appropriately classified as such by authorities, leading to underestimations of actual levels of femicide. Furthermore, globally, reporting of femicide tends to be limited to gender-related killings that occur in the context of intimate-partner violence and/or violence by other family members. In 2022 and 2023, UN Women focused on developing standards in support of strong data-collection models and supported research that helped advance the understanding of femicide beyond intimate-partner and family perpetration.

- **Globally**, UN Women and UNODC worked together to establish the *Statistical Framework for Measuring the Gender-Related Killings of Women and Girls*⁹² that was formally adopted by the UNSC in March 2022. The framework aims to enhance the collection of data on the different forms of femicide, beyond cases happening in the private domestic sphere, through a standardized approach. The statistical framework is a tool that can be used by Member States to collect, analyse and disseminate data on gender-related killings and on the criminal justice response (arrests, prosecutions, convictions). As per the UNSC mandate, UN Women and UNODC are jointly piloting the framework in different countries across Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Based on collected data, UN Women and UNODC published the first global joint report with estimates of femicide in 2022.⁹³ The publication is an annual research series with the second joint report published in 2023.⁹⁴

- In **Serbia, Montenegro and Albania**, UN Women made great strides on the creation of a shared data-collection model on femicide in 2023 to enhance understanding of its characteristics, patterns and causes. UN Women systematized cross-sectoral data on femicide and conducted an analysis of approximately 140 final court decisions on cases involving the killing of women across the three countries. Additionally, UN Women facilitated the participation of over 350 professionals in evaluating institutional capacities for preventing VAWG and providing necessary protections. Through key partnerships with various stakeholders, UN Women also supported the identification and analysis of more than 100 femicide cases from 2020 to 2022 based on media reports. This brought to light previously unrecorded cases and bolstered the commitment of governments and authorities in each country to eradicating femicide and establish a femicide watch.
- A conference on femicide data co-hosted by UN Women's **Asia and the Pacific** Regional Office in September 2023, which convened 60 international experts to tackle challenges in femicide data-collection, analysis and policy development, contributed to a pilot study of the Statistical Framework for Measuring Gender-Related Killings, and lead to commitments from the Governments of **Fiji** and **Mongolia** to pilot the framework, and from experts from **Indonesia** and **Pakistan** to apply gender analysis to femicide cases. These outcomes underscore UN Women's leadership in driving evidence-based strategies to improve identification, investigation and prevention of high-risk violence against women and girls, to ultimately reduce femicide rates in the region.

“No woman or girl should fear for her life because of who she is. To stop all forms of gender-related killings of women and girls, we need to count every victim, everywhere, and improve understanding of the risks and drivers of femicide so we can design better and more effective prevention and criminal justice responses.” —UNODC Executive Director Ghada Waly

3.5.3 Increased capacity of institutions to collect, analyse, use and disseminate high-quality administrative data on violence against women and girls

Administrative data can provide invaluable information about responses to VAWG and survivors' needs. High-quality VAWG administrative data enables States to effectively: monitor who seeks help; track the delivery of services; identify training and resource needs; and assess outcomes for survivors and accountability of perpetrators as they seek to improve VAWG policy and programming. During COVID-19, VAWG administrative data were crucial for global and local advocacy to prioritize measures to address VAWG in States' response plans. Ensuring the availability of robust VAWG administrative data is also crucial for developing and implementing Emergency Response Plans to eradicate VAWG. In 2022 and 2023, UN Women strengthened institutional capacities through guidance and dialogues to produce and use data for better service-delivery on VAWG, provided financial support to collect and disseminate the right kind of information and developed global standards to facilitate data collection on gender-based violence.

- Across **Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries**, UN Women strengthened the quality of administrative data on VAWG and ethical data-collection practices by engaging key partners through user-producer dialogues in the process of developing the Global Technical Guidance for the Collection and Use of Administrative Data on Violence against Women published in 2022. Under the aegis of the Caribbean Regional Spotlight Initiative, consultations were conducted on the importance of administrative data to eliminate VAWG. User-producer dialogues were held with representatives of ministries, departments and agencies and CSOs across CARICOM countries. Across the board, entities concerned with developing statistical systems for their national institutions, CSOs responding to victims/ survivors of VAWG, or regional research planning and academic institutions also strengthened their capacities on

administrative data on VAWG. The findings of the user-producer dialogues informed the development of the CARICOM Guidelines and Protocols on the Collection and Use of Administrative Data on Violence against Women and Girls that were adopted by the CARICOM Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians in November 2023.

- In **Indonesia**, UN Women worked closely with Komnas Perempuan (the National Commission on Violence against Women) to strengthen its VAWG data-collection system, which had an incredible impact in more accurately surfacing cases of violence. A 2022 report by the Kompas Perempuan¹⁰² revealed that there were 338,496 cases of VAWG in 2021, a 50 per cent increase from the previous year's 226,062 cases. This work also included enhancing the capacity of the Complaint and Referral Unit in case-handling. It provided essential equipment like computers, mobile phones and software, and helped Komnas Perempuan recruit additional human resources for data collection and analysis.
- In 2023, **West and Central Africa** and **East and Southern Africa** Regional Offices, in collaboration with The Sexual Violence Research Initiative, facilitated the Africa Shared Research Agenda for ending GBV (ASRA), which is a set of research priority recommendations for the field identified through a rigorous, comprehensive and inclusive process that centres the opinions and voices of those the research will serve. It is a unique approach that was developed through collaboration and co-creation, which is essential for bringing about an end to GBV. This provides a framework to strengthen the advocacy of women's rights organizations in Africa to address GBV and has helped establish UN Women's position as a thought-leader in outlining research agendas.

3.5.4 Advancing innovations to fill critical data gaps in violence against women and girls data

Remote survey data-collection on VAWG is an emerging approach that has been required for VAWG researchers working in contexts where in-person interviews are not possible. In addition, emerging fields of research, such as understanding the scope and forms of technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, require the use of new data sources such as big data and social media analysis. In 2022–2023, UN Women developed and piloted innovative methods to fill data gaps and advance the research field.

Maintaining the safety and privacy of participants and interviewers is the utmost priority. Following ethical guidelines is equally of paramount importance in carrying out VAWG research. Innovative data-collection methods highlight key ways to maintain safety and minimize risks when undertaking this work. Safety should always be prioritized over research and data-collection needs.

- In 2022, UN Women published a guidance on phone-based interviews to collect VAWG data.⁹⁶ Globally, this guidance was informed by rapid gender assessments (RGAs) conducted in 2021 on the impact of COVID-19 on VAWG in 13 countries,⁹⁷ in collaboration with Ipsos and with support from national statistical offices and national women's machineries. The VAWG RGAs provided a first opportunity to test existing guidance and recommendations on remote data collection for VAWG, and as a result, gathered learnings and empirical evidence, both in terms of safety protocols and VAWG measurement. This guidance offers a set of recommendations based on these learnings, to ensure the ethical and safe conduct of VAWG data collection through computer-assisted telephone interviewing. It also complements a UN Women and WHO's brief on VAWG data-collection during COVID-19.⁹⁸ The guidance filled a critical gap in methods and safety and ethical guidance to collect data when face-to-face interviews are not feasible, such as in crisis situations or in small communities.

- In the **Arab States**, UN Women piloted a multi-country study using an innovative web-based data-collection technology, surveying nearly 11,500 women and men Internet users over the age of 18 in **Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen**.⁹⁹ The key findings are that nearly half (49 per cent) of surveyed women Internet-users in the Arab States reported feeling unsafe from online harassment, rising to 70 per cent among women activists and human rights defenders. Moreover, 44 per cent of women who experienced online violence said it had happened more than once.
- The same Arab States methodology was adjusted and applied in research conducted across **Europe and Central Asia** in 2023.¹⁰⁰ The research explores the types and prevalence of TF GBV in 13 countries – **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo,¹⁰¹ Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Ukraine** – and its consequences on women and girls' attitudes, experiences and access to services. A large-scale web-based survey was implemented with over 12,000 women across the region in addition to interviews with State representatives, including from national gender mechanisms, ombudsperson's offices, police and civil society representatives to draft evidence-based recommendations to strengthen the prevention of and response to TF GBV. The survey shows that more than half of women over 18 years old who are online in the region have experienced some form of technology-facilitated violence in their lifetime, and that among women who experienced TF GBV, the most prevalent forms include: receiving unwanted or offensive content or messages (39.7 per cent); receiving inappropriate sexual advances or content on social networking (30 per cent); and hacking women's accounts and web pages (25.4 per cent).



3.6 Movement Building

Partnering with women's right organizations and coalitions for strengthening movements to end violence against women and girls.

The presence of a strong and autonomous feminist movement is the single-most critical factor to drive policy change on EVAWG, both in transnational contexts and in domestic policymaking.¹⁰³ Similarly, research has shown that large-scale reductions in VAWG are possible through the coordinated and multisectoral actions of governments and civil society, and intensive advocacy efforts and media campaigns carried out by feminist organizations.¹⁰⁴ The work of the women's rights movement involves holding decision-makers accountable, advocating for women's rights, and ensuring that VAWG prevention and response policies and programmes are informed by the experiences and expertise of diverse women and girls.¹⁰⁵ And yet, across various contexts, movements and their members face increasing restrictions on their operations and their civic space, pushback on gender equality and women's rights, reprisal-based threats, harassment and violence and inadequate, inflexible funding, amongst other multiple barriers.

UN Women's continued support for feminist and women's movements, working with diverse women's rights organizations, among other CSOs and individual advocates, seeks to enhance principled and purposeful pathways to strengthen women's movements,

through seven key areas of action: 1) advocate for improved civic space for WROs; 2) provide financial and technical support to advocates and CSOs; 3) strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of CSOs; 4) promote CSO representation, leadership and effective participation; 5) facilitate networks and coalitions for solidarity; 6) convene multi-stakeholder actors for coordinated and collaborative action; and 7) support co-creation and knowledge generation with civil society.

In 2022–2023, UN Women strengthened efforts to end VAWG by prioritizing partnerships to strengthen the capacities of CSOs through training in gender analysis, programme development and advocacy, enhancing network's resilience for EVAWG, among others. To sustain impact, UN Women provided accessible funding and advocated for flexible, long-term support for organizations advancing gender equality and EVAWG. Transformative results were achieved by working on increasing investment in and support for women's rights organizations, supporting movement-building; and strengthening access to resources and spaces for feminist networking, knowledge-sharing, strategizing, collaboration and coalition-building on ending VAWG.

IN 2022–2023, WITH UN WOMEN'S SUPPORT:



25.5

MILLION USD

disbursed to support CSOs, especially women's organizations, working to end VAWG, through UN Women programmes and grant-giving.



1500 330

in 2022 & in 2023

**WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT
ORGANIZATIONS**

established or strengthened on gender-disaggregated data, with a focus on violence against women data.



49 64

in 2022 & in 2023

**DIALOGUES, MECHANISMS,
PLATFORMS AND/OR
COALITIONS**

created and sustained, enabling meaningful and safe participation and engagement by gender equality advocates and CSOs.



222

**EVAWG ADVOCACY
INITIATIVES**

conducted with partners to increase quality, flexible core funding for CSOs, especially women's organizations, working on gender equality and women's empowerment.

3.6.1 Increased investment in and support for women's rights organizations, boosting movement-building

Despite providing critical services and the necessary monitoring and advocacy to ensure that women's rights are promoted and protected, organizations and feminist movements remain severely underfunded. According to an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) analysis, 99 per cent of gender-related Official Development Assistance does not reach local women's rights organizations and feminist movements. Only about 5 per cent of the total OECD Member States' funding for ending violence against women and girls is allocated to CSOs.

In 2022 and 2023, UN Women supported women's rights organizations and civil society by bolstering movement-building efforts. It empowered diverse groups to drive long-term change and advocate for gender equality and women's rights on a larger scale. This support strengthened capacities, built resilience and promoted collaboration within feminist networks to amplify their impact on national and regional advocacy.

- An estimated 16,000 people had increased understanding of gender stereotypes and gender equality through a UN Women project that awarded 22 CSOs from six **Eastern European countries** with small innovation-focused grants to address discriminatory social norms and stereotypes in public spheres. In **Ukraine**, activities included producing a short film about the challenges of parenthood, a TikTok campaign, and addressing gender-based discrimination in Ukrainian universities, while in **Georgia**, one project analysed gender stereotypes in school textbooks,

trained police, and launched a creative awareness-raising campaign on stereotypes.

- In the **Asia and the Pacific** region, UN Women provided technical and financial support to one of the key CSO networks in the region, namely the GBV Prevention and Response Network Asia to organize a key Summit. This CSO network, consisting of 14 different gender equality organizations is a major follow-up to the Generation Equality Forum, led by Commitment Makers of the AC GBV, organized the REFRAME Summit in 2022. The Summit was an important milestone, bringing together experts from diverse backgrounds in Asia to create a collective advocacy agenda on GBV prevention and response. UN Women's financial and technical support enabled the network to form and hold its first in-person meeting in February 2023 in Malaysia, where members established the network's foundation.
- Through the Spotlight Initiative **Latin America** Regional Programme, UN Women strengthened alliances with 228 CSOs representing historically marginalized groups, including women with disabilities, Indigenous, Afrodescendant, trans and youth communities. By promoting the direct participation of these groups in evidence-generation, capacity-building and advocacy, UN Women ensured an intersectional and inclusive approach to addressing VAWG and femicide. The programme disbursed grants to 15 CSOs to enhance their organizational capacities, support economic empowerment, and reduce vulnerabilities for women and girls.

3.6.2 Strengthened access to resources and spaces for feminist networking, knowledge-sharing, strategizing, collaboration and coalition-building on ending violence against women and girls

Women's rights organizations are key actors in eradicating violence against women and girls, including through multi-sectoral prevention partnerships and in holding governments to account by monitoring their commitments and demanding redress when duties and commitments are not met. However, shrinking civic spaces and growing attacks on women's rights activists and women's human rights defenders are creating hostile environments for women's rights activism and undermining accountability.

- In **Papua New Guinea**, a 20-day human rights activism campaign in 2022 brought widespread attention to gender equality and women's empowerment and key recommendations to help women affected by HIV/AIDS. Through the Spotlight Initiative, UN Women co-hosted the annual CSO forum with the Papua New Guinea Institute of National Affairs and the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council. The CSO forum was broadcast on national TV and live radio, featuring interviews with human rights defenders and key CSO representatives. With 28 CSOs present, alongside key government departments and donors, including the EU Ambassador and EU Spotlight Initiative representative, the event became a critical platform for advocacy. During a technical dialogue attended by 103 people from 13 CSOs, including the Youth Alliance against HIV, 10 key recommendations were developed by women affected by HIV and AIDS to guide actions by government and development partners.
- In **Asia**, about 138,000 users of community-based and women-led networks took an active role in preventing VAWG and trafficking as a part of the Safe and Fair Programme. UN Women supported the creation of peer networks of migrant workers in **Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore** and **Viet Nam** that played a pivotal role in the response to the pandemic's impact on migrant workers by increasing access to information, preventing violence, abuse and trafficking and providing support for safe migration and access to essential services. More specifically, the programme supported the establishment of the migrant domestic workers network PERTIMIG

in **Malaysia**; the transnational union for Filipino domestic and care workers PINAY in **the Philippines**; the workers' group for **Indonesian** migrant domestic workers IPPMI, and the "Suara Kita" platform for Indonesian migrant domestic workers to network in **Singapore**. In total, through these networks, online engagement has increased both the number of peer network members and improved the quality of interactions between network members. As a result, about 9,250 women migrant workers have joined workers' organizations or joined networks of informal workers' associations.

"To women migrant workers who are still abroad, I would like to say: Keep yourselves safe and stay connected with your loved ones. It is important to have up-to-date information on available services, including in response to violence and abuses, and rules on migration procedures, including legal aspects. If possible, try to form a small network with your colleagues. It could be as simple as something like a group chat on mobile messengers. For those who are planning to come back, I would like to say: 'Welcome home, you are most welcome'. Solidarity is what we all need, not discrimination against returnee women migrant workers." —Dok Samuon, peer-networking group, Cambodia

- Through the Spotlight Regional Programme in **Europe and Central Asia**, UN Women established the Central Asian Alliance to End Gender-Based Violence to create a platform for knowledge-sharing and expertise to prevent and address VAWG in the region. Building on UN Women's networks, the Alliance established a regional network of over 500 civil society actors, an informal youth network, and a community of practice for police that is estimated to benefit 35 million women and girls in five Central Asian countries. The programme conducted comprehensive national and regional assessments on sexual and gender-based violence legal frameworks, their alignment with international standards, gender-responsive budgeting,

crisis centre funding, and the coordination of health, social and police sectors in the multisectoral response to sexual and gender-based violence. Additionally, the alliance launched two studies on intersectionality and gender-based violence that examined men's experiences, perceptions and perpetration of gender-based violence in **Kazakhstan**.

- UN Women supported women's organizations in **Sierra Leone** to advocate for the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act, which was passed in 2022 and includes provisions for addressing GBV and ensuring the greater participation of women in leadership roles. Through partnerships with local women's movements, UN Women provided technical assistance, training and resources to amplify advocacy efforts that culminated in this legislative milestone.
- In **West and Central Africa**, grassroots organizations from 13 countries got together to inform decision-makers, including Ministers of Justice and Women's Affairs from the region and representatives of regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community of Central African States,

on strategies for prevention, advocacy and successful interventions to end VAWG. As a result, the Abidjan Declaration of the West and Central African women's movement against GBV, which contains a list of coordinated actions between civil society, institutional and non-institutional state actors, was adopted. It includes amongst others the creation of a regional fund to combat GBV financed by governments, donors and the communities themselves.

"There is too little information on women's movements and activists around GBV, hence the relevance of this forum to document and gather data on these movements. There is a global upsurge in cases of GBV, especially in Africa, and COVID has also had devastating effects, such as the feminization of poverty. We must all work together to ensure that the women and men of our region can live in an environment free from violence." - Sandra Oulate Fattoh, Director of the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre



4. LOOKING AHEAD

In 2022–2023, UN Women strengthened its role as a key ally, strategic partner, and advocate in the global effort to achieve gender equality and end violence against women and girls (EVAWG). Leveraging its core mandate as the UN agency established in response to civil society and women’s movement advocacy, UN Women advanced EVAWG priorities through a comprehensive and integrated approach, driving progress toward a world free from violence and inequality.

This commitment has been further strengthened by the UN Secretary-General’s launch of the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP) in March 2024. The plan underscores the need for gender-responsive leadership, accountability, and increased resourcing for gender equality, with a target of 15 per cent of programme expenditures dedicated to achieving gender equality. UN Women has been entrusted with a critical leadership role through managing the GEAP Secretariat and plays a leading role in operationalising the accelerators, demonstrating its central role in advancing these transformative efforts.

Concurrently, UN Women’s Push Forward for Rights, Equality and Justice Strategy,¹⁰⁶ launched in late 2024, seeks to reinvigorate global and national commitments to women’s rights and gender equality amidst growing political pushback and regression. The strategy emphasizes multi-stakeholder alliances, inclusive dialogues and support to human rights defenders. Through high level advocacy, mapping of challenges, and mobilising for Beijing+30, the strategy prioritizes the promotion of gender-transformative policies ensuring that gender equality remains central to political agendas, particularly during elections.

UN Women is also building on its work with the women’s movement, learning from the results in Spotlight 1.0 and leveraging a leadership role in Spotlight 2.0 building, through a new strategic partnership with the European Union, the Advocacy, Coalition-Building, Transformative Feminist Action (ACT) programme, officially launched during the United Nation’s seventy-ninth General Assembly in 2024. The ACT programme supports feminist organizations, networks and coalitions to support movement-building for gender equality and EVAWG. Additionally, UN Women is expanding its focus and investment to continue implementing global standards at national and local levels to improve the prevention and response to VAWG, and to further address emerging challenges including technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

Ending violence against women and girls is crucial to creating healthier, equitable and more resilient communities while advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Funding for EVAWG initiatives is more critical now than ever, as gender equality serves as a key driver and catalyst for transformative change across all the SDGs. The combined effects of COVID-19, ongoing humanitarian crises, and the escalating impacts of climate change have exacerbated the vulnerabilities of women and girls and limited access to essential support services. Addressing these gaps and prioritising gender equality across public, private and social spheres, could unlock transformative progress. By sustaining its leadership and deepening its investments, UN Women is poised to drive lasting, systemic change that transforms lives and paves the way for a more just and equitable world¹⁰⁷.

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UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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