



## **Ending violence against women Challenges and recommendations to the Norwegian government**

Women, no matter where they live, how old they are, or what status they have, are exposed to violence. One in three women globally is subjected to violence during their lifetime. The connection between gender and basic human rights violations is both staggering and universal. The elimination of violence against women should be society's responsibility, and not considered a private matter and neglected as a political question. Greater attention should be given to ensuring respect for women's human rights including in schools and other institutions to promote peace and human rights education. Ending violence against women requires cultural changes in all societies. Effective gender mainstreaming in development policy is a prerequisite for achieving full gender

This document is based on the experience of FOKUS and our international partners<sup>1</sup>, who meet at the FOKUS / Norad seminar on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2005 in relation to the TV campaign "Dream Catcher" who raised money for the elimination of violence against women.

The recommendations should be regarded as in input for the fulfilment of Norway's commitments towards the Beijing Platform for Action, UN Millennium Development Goals and their strategy on women in development assistance.

### **Violence in intimate relationships:**

*One in four women is exposed to domestic violence, and this represents one of the main causes of injury and death among women worldwide.*

FOKUS put the following challenges to the Norwegian government:

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<sup>1</sup> Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, Philippines  
Inter African Committee against traditional practices, Gambia  
YWCA, Sudan  
Masimanyane Support Centre, South Africa  
UNIFEM, Caribbean

- Provide sufficient funding to establish and run crisis centres and bring valuable knowledge about various initiatives to the forefront to other women's organisations, local and national governments.
- Establish regular consultations between Norwegian representations abroad and local women's organisations.
- Support the establishment of protective laws and national actions at the governmental level to bring about lasting changes, including continued work with police and judiciary and development of accountable interventions towards perpetrators. The implementation of legislation should be supported by the Norwegian government development assistance.
- Support the collection of data and research and documentation of violence against women. This is vital in order to understand the scope and magnitude of the problem, find effective methods and mobilise the resources needed to fight violence.
- Highlight strategies to prevent violence from happening. These initiatives must include men and build on positive actions initiated by men. This is a new area where pilot projects are needed.

### **Trafficking in women**

*Estimates indicate that more than four million human beings are bought and sold each year, and over 700 000 young women end up in Western Europe, many of them in the sex- industry.*

FOKUS put the following challenges to the Norwegian government:

- Provide sufficient funding of projects that aims at supporting victims of trafficking, especially for sexual exploitation. Women should be protected and to have adequate counselling, shelters and alternative income alternatives. This must be of priority in development policy.
- Establish and implement a legal framework at the international and national level that puts the protection of the trafficked women in the forefront. Norway should support the implementation of the UN Palermo protocol.
- Address the demand side of prostitution and target men as buyers with legal and informative means. Motivate men to become agents for ending trafficking in women should be included in all policies regarding trafficking.
- Fund preventive measures for the economic empowerment of women so that they are not easy targets for traffickers and give women a realistic possibility to start a new life after being trafficked.

### **Women in war and conflict**

*Everything that is negative in peacetime becomes worse in war- including violence against women. Women are often exposed to violence and sexual torture from the enemy.*

FOKUS put the following challenges to the Norwegian government:

- Security Council resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security must be fully implemented and Norway must be in the forefront in this.
- Sufficient places of refuge, social services and medical resources in war affected areas and protection of women and girls against violence, including sexual violence and enact legislation to protect women and end impunity for perpetrators must be secured
- Recognise the principle of equal representation of women and men in peace negotiations, constitution- making or reviewing processes, and in political structures at all levels.
- Make sure that women's human rights are protected and that their freedom of expression is respected and protected.
- Implement policies that ensure women's economic empowerment and give access to entrepreneurship and economic opportunities.
- Support initiatives that aim at preventing war and conflict, especially by including NGOs in these efforts.
- Secure that the UN Peace- keeping Commission has equal representation of both women and men and that special attention to gender based violence is included in its mandate.

### **Female genital mutilation**

*Each year around two million girls are circumcised, with enormous pain and subsequent injury.*

FOKUS put the following challenges to the Norwegian government:

- Continue the awareness creation campaign against harmful traditional practices, particularly FGM, targeting all the critical actors, including building the capacity of health care providers, to be able to include the effects of FGM on female reproductive health.
- Harmonise the regional efforts on the continent and continue the dialogue among the various actors
- Bridge the gap between efforts made by African immigrants in Europe through networking.
- Encourage more donor support to local initiatives on the continent particularly to women's and children's rights organisation.
- Support research and documentation on traditional practices in the various countries in Africa
- Encourage the sharing of experience and best practices for advancement of knowledge and use the African competence in European strategies.
- The Norwegian government has put FGM on their national and international agenda. They must now commit funding to support activities to advance the cause of elimination of FGM.

## **Partnership between women's organisations for the realisation of women's human rights**

- Violence against women must be linked to what feeds it: gender inequality. Women's subordinated situation, especially in the economic sphere, hinders women in claiming and asserting their rights. Ending the feminisation of poverty and promoting cultural changes are therefore our common priority.
- Women's organisations, in Norway and in countries where we have partnership, must work closely together in supporting each others efforts and developing strategies for women's empowerment. Women's organisations in the south are good role models and inspiration for Norwegian government and organisations in their national work. The sharing of best practises must be encouraged and funded.
- Women's organisations have analysed and developed effective responses to violence in their societies. These experiences and demands must be brought to our respective governments and included in their policies and programs in order to end violence against women through the empowerment of women.