

# Integrating Gender Based Violence into the post-2015 development agenda

## Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence

### DISCUSSION PAPER

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been the leading international development framework for more than a decade and the 2015 deadline for achieving them is fast approaching.

The debate on what should follow these MDGs is gaining momentum and various actors are engaged in a process of reviewing and critiquing the MDGs and extracting lessons in the build-up to a new framework.<sup>1</sup> This is a critical opportunity to influence the post-2015 agenda and ensure that gender equality and gender based violence (GBV) are at the forefront of the debate.

The MDGs made a commitment to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, and ensure adequate education, health care and gender equality for all. Many developing countries have made significant efforts toward achieving the MDGs and there have been successes in some of the goals.<sup>2</sup> Having MDG3 focussing on gender equality has been a powerful advocacy tool, drawing increased attention to equality issues for women and girls. This goal has strengthened accountability for commitments made on gender equality, which has enabled women's organisations to advocate for women's rights and to hold their governments to account.

#### The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

- GOAL 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- GOAL 2: Achieve universal primary education
- GOAL 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- GOAL 4: Reduce child mortality
- GOAL 5: Improve maternal health
- GOAL 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other disease
- GOAL 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- GOAL 8: Develop a global partnership for development

### The post-2015 agenda

The United Nations has initiated a global consultation on what should follow the MDGs in 2015. The Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence is taking part in the process, by presenting a submission to the UN global thematic consultation on *Addressing Inequalities* and producing a research report entitled *Integrating Gender Based Violence: The post-2015 agenda* which has informed this *Discussion Paper*. The Consortium is uniquely placed to bring a variety of voices and experiences into the consultation process. This research was based on in-depth interviews with directors of women's community based organisations in different countries, regional staff of the Consortium members, staff in policy roles from international organisations and academics, in addition to the extensive experience of Consortium members and a comprehensive literature review.

<sup>1</sup> In tandem with this dialogue on what should follow the MDGs post-2015, is a discussion on proposed Sustainable Development Goals which emerged following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20. Clearly there will be a need for consistency and coherence between these two approaches, including on gender equality and GBV

<sup>2</sup> United Nations. *Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals*. Outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals at its sixty-fifth session. October 2010.

Gender based violence is an abuse of human rights, both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality, and is a major factor undermining development, peace, and the realisation of human rights. The Consortium argues that addressing gender based violence is integral for global development and should be part of any new framework post 2015. In order to make progress on addressing gender based violence, both prevention and response interventions must have visibility, credibility, high level leadership and wide support. Therefore, the Consortium believes that any new framework should have a standalone domain and targets to address gender equality and gender based violence. In addition, all other dimensions of the Post 2015 framework should integrate targets to address gender inequality and gender based violence.

The Consortium understands the term Gender based violence to mean any act of violence that arises from or is driven by gender inequalities, discrimination, roles, disparities or expectations. It includes any act that results in, or is likely to cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering for an individual or group of people, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Gender based violence encompasses sexual violence, domestic violence, sex trafficking, harmful practices, forced / early marriage, forced prostitution, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation. Gender based violence is exacerbated by war and is increasingly a feature of conflicts.<sup>3</sup>

*These are some of the alarming statistics:*

- One woman in four has been physically or sexually abused by an intimate partner.<sup>4</sup>
- Between 70 million to 140 million girls and women have undergone some form of female genital mutilation/cutting FGM/C.<sup>5</sup>
- Over 64 million young women 20–24 years old were married before aged 18.<sup>6</sup>
- An estimated 800,000 people are trafficked across borders every year: 79 per cent are women and girls.<sup>7</sup> Trafficked women and girls are often raped, drugged, assaulted or threatened with violence.<sup>8</sup>
- The brutal murder of women solely because of their gender is on the increase in many countries. In a backlash against the women's movement, women human rights defenders are increasingly being targeted.<sup>9</sup>

## Gender based violence – the missing dimension in the MDGs

The UN is committed to implement the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ending violence against women and girls, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its optional protocols.<sup>10</sup> Governments have also signed up to international human rights instruments such as the Beijing Platform for Action and UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889, which are existing obligations to address gender based violence and women's equality.

<sup>3</sup> For further information see: Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (2009). *Keeping Gender on the Agenda: Gender Based Violence, Poverty and Development*. Issues Paper.

<sup>4</sup> Garcia-Moreno, C. et al. (2005). WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women: initial results on prevalence, health outcome and women's responses. p.20. The study was carried out in Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Peru, Namibia, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand and the United Republic of Tanzania

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 'Changing a Harmful Social Convention: Female genital mutilation/cutting', *Innocenti Digest*. No. 12, IRC, Florence, 2005, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, Progress for Children: A report card on child protection, Number 8. p.10

<sup>7</sup> [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-18144333](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-18144333)

<sup>8</sup> UNFPA. Gender based Violence, *Issue Paper*, Ha Noi, May 2010.

<sup>9</sup> *Latin American Newsletters*. Caribbean and Central America Report, August 2012, RC-12-08

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Millennium Declaration 8th plenary meeting 8 September 2000

However, a focus on these rights was lost in the MDG framework, which did not include violence against women and girls,<sup>11</sup> even though it impacts on all sectors in the goals. Gender based violence has direct implications for progress on all the MDGs because it impacts on girls' and women's access to education, productivity, health and well-being, HIV transmission, and it can lead to increased poverty. However, it was not incorporated into the MDG framework even though addressing gender based violence is fundamental to realising the specific MDG3 to promote gender equality and empower women.

“From a practitioner’s point of view it is a big problem that gender based violence is not integrated into the MDGs: it is perpetually ignored and just gets mentioned at a rhetorical level. Gender based violence is a huge development issue in Uganda, inhibiting gender equality. In Uganda 60 per cent of women experience domestic violence throughout their lives, making it difficult for them to participate in the development process - it is keeping us in poverty!” **Tina Musuya, Director, Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention, Uganda (Irish Aid partner)**

However, the UN report also refers to the many challenges that remain to meet the specific targets in MDG 3 to promote gender equality and empower women. Entrenched attitudes and social norms, unequal access to economic resources and opportunities, mean that gender inequality persists in many countries. There has been least progress on MDG 5 to reduce maternal mortality, which is linked to achieving gender equality and realising women's rights. In addition, inequalities and discrimination based on income, location, disability and ethnicity intersect with gender and are often mutually reinforcing. Gender discrimination is apparent in the lower rates of secondary education enrolment of girls, the under-representation of women in national parliaments, the wide gender gaps in access to decent employment, and the gendered nature of the HIV pandemic.

“Having MDG 3 has been critical to keep gender equality on the international agenda as otherwise it may have fallen off donor’s list of priorities. Violence is the big gap but it gets left out because of the many dimensions and impacts that are difficult to measure.”  
**Interview with Patti O’Neill, Coordinator DAC Network on Gender Equality, OECD.**

## Successes and Challenges

There has been significant progress toward achieving the MDGs, such as combating extreme poverty, improving school enrolment and child health, reducing child deaths, and expanding access to clean water.<sup>12</sup> The UN 2012 Progress Report<sup>13</sup> highlights that parity in primary education between girls and boys has been achieved and women now account for 19.7 per cent of parliamentarians worldwide. This amounts to nearly a 75 per cent increase since 1995, when women held 11.3 per cent of seats worldwide, and a 44 per cent increase since the year 2000.

## Measuring Progress

Although it is recognised that the scope and prevalence of violence against women and girls is a global problem, it is difficult to know the exact extent, and to make visible the different forms of violence, because of a lack of data and insufficient quality data in many countries. In a new post-2015 framework it will be necessary to agree on specific targets and indicators to make progress towards achieving gender equality and ending violence against women and girls. This will motivate governments to identify the extent of such violence and to take actions against it.

<sup>11</sup> UN TASK Force Addressing inequalities: The heart of the post-2015 agenda and the future we want for all. *Thematic Think Piece*. ECE, ESCAP, UNDESA, UNICEF, UNRISD, UN Women. May 2012 p.12

<sup>12</sup> United Nations. *Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals*. Op.cit.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations (2012). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012*, New York: United Nations. From <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/publications/mdg-report-2012.html>

Having specific targets will make gender based violence more visible and enable civil society organisations to build more effective programmes, monitor progress, and hold their governments to account.

Targets are important to ensure that budgets are in place to address gender based violence and to channel adequate resources for support services. It is also an argument for prioritising financial support towards violence prevention activities. The OECD Statistics Division stress that more information on the scope of gender based violence is needed, and available data show that it costs billions of dollars for extra health care and social services expenditure. Furthermore, the economy is affected by lower productivity when women cannot work because of the impact of gender based violence on their health and well-being.<sup>14</sup>

***The Consortium has identified the following recommendations for actions, which will help ensure that gender equality and gender based violence are incorporated into any future framework.***

***Recommendation 1: A framework based on human rights***

Existing UN Human Rights Conventions on gender equality and international commitments to tackle gender based violence should be included in the overarching principles of any new post-2015 framework.

It is important to tackle gender based violence as a justice issue and governments must ensure that laws and international agreements are implemented. Having specific targets in a new framework will put pressure on governments to meet their obligations and commitments.

“Unfortunately, the MDGs have made violence invisible and left behind Beijing agreements and CEDAW. It is essential that addressing gender based violence should be a central pillar of any new framework. Violence against women and girls is multi-dimensional and a condition of discrimination. We need resources and a clear direction at a global level to relocate violence at the centre of a new framework.” **Mirta Kennedy, Director, Centro de Estudios de la Mujer, Honduras**

***Recommendation 2: A twin-track approach***

In a new post-2015 framework there should be a twin-track approach to tackle gender equality and gender based violence:

- a) *A standalone domain* is necessary with specific targets to tackle poverty and address underlying structural barriers to gender inequality, such as: unequal power relations, unequal access to and control of resources, and gender division of labour. Gender based violence reinforces gender inequalities by restricting girls’ and women’s options and capabilities and must be addressed in the framework.
- b) *Integrating gender equality and gender based violence into all other development domains* with specific targets and indicators in multi sector programmes (health, education, livelihoods, governance, justice, security, and social welfare). This means including a gender focus in all targets to ensure that women’s and girls’ poverty and inequality are not hidden and that they are benefitting from development programmes.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Patti O’Neill, Deputy Head, Policy Division, and Co-ordinator of the DAC Network on Gender Equality, OECD. 22/9/2012

<sup>15</sup> GAD Network. Gender Equality and the post 2015 Framework. *Briefings 3*, July 2012.

“It is critical to address violence in MDG3 on gender equality but it needs to be integrated across all goals. A lot of work on violence against women has focussed on support services, redress and justice for women who face violence and it is critical that they have this support, but it also means that work becomes specialised. We need to focus more on prevention and have a wider range of strategies on violence against women.”

**Mona Mehta, GEKN Oxfam GB Regional Office South Asia, Bangkok**

### ***Recommendation 3: Benchmarks and indicators***

In order to address the gender gaps that persist in many sectors, it is essential to have yardsticks and specific indicators to measure progress on gender equality in any new framework.

These should include targets to measure progress on ending gender based violence, and indicators to measure and monitor prevention, social protection and service provision. This will require developing new indicators to motivate governments to collect data and to monitor the extent of violence and trends over time.

To develop international indicators on gender based violence, the categories of forms of violence for which data will be collected must first be agreed. Data should be collected for these different forms and there should be a standardised format for gathering data at a national and international level to compare information across countries or regions.

“One shortcoming in the current MDG framework is that GBV is not benchmarked so it is difficult to measure - public health outcomes are more challenging to measure than other outcomes. We need data to have a better sense of progress, and also examples of countries where prevalence has been down. It is easy to under/over estimate, and it is easy for governments to say they are doing prevention activities and campaigns but they have no results to show impact. We need data to show evidence-based prevention, metrics around protection and screening processes in health and HIV exist, and these make a difference. But we need to see a qualitative leap in data to have the parameters in place to show what works to measure change of attitudes. This needs to be mandated more, for example in schools and health clinics.” **Gary Barker, CEO PROMUNDO, Brazil and Washington**

### ***Recommendation 4: Increased gender analysis and disaggregation of data***

Strengthening capacity for gender analysis and understanding the underlying causes of gender based violence is a priority. There should also be an increase of sex-disaggregated data collection and more extensive coverage and sampling of marginalised populations reflected in national and international reports.

Intersecting inequalities and discrimination makes socially excluded groups harder to reach and means that they do not benefit from development to the same extent as other sections of the population. Therefore it is important that national surveys include all ethnic and other population groups, such as older women, disabled women and girls, migrant and refugee women and girls, and that data is disaggregated according to a range of characteristics such as: ethnicity, age, disability, legal status and location. Using intersectional analysis will help to identify the different needs of marginalised groups to prioritise and target service delivery and address different cultural norms.

Collecting this data will contribute to increased awareness and enhance the capacity of governments and civil society to evaluate legislative and policy reforms, and to take action to address inequality and violence against women and girls.

**Recommendation 5: Ensuring that women's voices are heard**

Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure civil society is involved in the process of developing the post 2015 framework and in monitoring progress in reaching new targets through alternative or shadow reporting. In particular, the views of women's organisations and the voices of women and girls should be sought, supported and taken into account at all stages of the process.

"Women on the ground have to be at the centre of a new framework, but often the women who are affected by violence haven't been empowered enough to be engaged as agents of change in the process. We need to support and empower women on the ground to get access to resources, access to justice and services. **Salome Mbugua, CEO AKIDWA, Ireland**

"The World Development Report findings make it very clear that the area of women's voice, agency and participation has been relatively neglected by development agencies and government partners. We are now starting to look at what we know, where the gaps are, and what actions are most effective in addressing women's relative lack of voice, agency and participation, including in the important sub-theme of gender based violence. The work is only starting, but we have been encouraged to find that many organisations, including the WB, actually have good examples of addressing some of these issues, including GBV, also in programs where we wouldn't normally expect it." **Malcolm Ehrenpreis, Gender and Development Unit, World Bank**

**Recommendation 6: A global partnership for development**

An essential component of a global partnership must include ensuring adequate financial resources to work towards ending violence against women and girls.

- a) A new framework should include gender budgeting to track resource allocation for gender equality and gender based violence programmes and to assess the full cost of gender based violence in the health, education, welfare, and judiciary sectors. This will help identify spending priorities for governments to address gender equality.
- b) Increased funding should be made available internationally for specific initiatives on gender based violence, especially prevention work, women's participation and advocacy activities.

In the current aid environment funding for women's advocacy activities and for women's grassroots organisations are often not a priority, and there have been cutbacks in budgets for women's ministries and municipal women's offices in many countries. In order to take forward work on violence, resources are needed and new investments committed for gender equality and specific funds and budget lines made available from bi-lateral and multi-lateral donor agencies and international NGOs.

"Funding policies have changed and now donors give funding to support services but not for women's organisations. But women are plugging the holes when budgets are cut and women's organisations doing advocacy and policy work on violence are closing down because of lack of funds. Our voices need to be heard!" **Maimuna Kanyamala, Executive Director Kivulini Women's Rights Organisation, Tanzania**

The Consortium and its member organisations are well placed to work together, find better ways to support women's organisations and strengthen this global partnership, as well as to take forward a commitment to gender equality and ending gender based violence.

## Key opportunities to influence the post-2015 agenda

There are many opportunities to engage with the post-2015 debate. It is essential that human rights, development and civil society organisations, particularly women's rights groups, participate in these processes to ensure that gender based violence and gender equality are adequately considered in these discussions and that they are included in a new framework. It is especially important to influence governments to recognise the importance of explicitly incorporating gender based violence, as it is UN Member States that will ultimately approve the final post- 2015 commitments.

The United Nations global consultation on the post-2015 framework will run through to September 2013. Further consultative mechanisms and activities will take place between September 2013 and 2015.

### *National and Regional Consultations:*

The UN Development Group (UNDG) will conduct national consultations in at least 50 developing countries. Participants will include: NGOs, community-based organisations, universities and research institutions, private sector, interest groups, national human rights institutions or ombudsmen, and political decision makers. Country-level UNDG teams will submit country-level reports by the end of March 2013, outlining key issues and findings from the stakeholder consultations. International NGOs and their partners should take up the opportunity to engage in these consultations.

### *Thematic consultations:*

UN specialised agencies are co-ordinating these consultations, co-chaired by two UN Member States (one developed country and one developing country for each theme) with academics, media, businesses, trade unions, and civil society. They have started and will run until March 2013 covering the following themes (which will also form part of the national consultations): (1) inequality (2) health; (3) education (4) growth and employment (5) environmental sustainability (6) food security and nutrition (7) governance (8) conflict and fragility (9) population dynamics. Two additional themes are also being considered: water and energy access. The

Consortium has submitted a paper to the consultation on *Addressing Inequalities* and civil society organisations are encouraged to take part in the other thematic consultations.

*A UN High-level panel* has been set up with 20 members and 3 co-Chairs (the UK prime minister, and the presidents of Liberia and Indonesia) and it has started consultation meetings on the dimensions of economic growth, social equality and environmental sustainability, and will also take into account the challenges of countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. The High Level Panel will take into consideration the findings of the national and thematic consultations at regional and national levels. Their report on the vision for the post 2015 agenda and recommendations will be published in May 2013 and there will be opportunities for Civil Society Organisations to respond.

*The World We Want 2015* is co-hosted by civil society and the United Nations to hold an exchange of civil society opinions on the web. The information gathered will feed into the report of the UN High Level Panel on post-2015 and the UN Secretary General's report to the UN MDG Review Summit in September 2013. [www.worldwewant2015.org](http://www.worldwewant2015.org)

### *UN Commission on the Status of Women 2013 and 2014*

The priority theme of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women is "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls" and the 2014 session will review the MDGs. These will be key opportunities for Consortium members to work together to develop shared strategies to feed into the negotiations on the Agreed Conclusions and other resolutions. The Irish government will deliver a national statement and will also participate in the negotiations while Consortium members with consultative status can present oral and written statements to the Commission.

### *The EU Presidency and activities in Ireland*

In January, Ireland will assume the Presidency of the European Council for the first half of 2013. The primary development cooperation priority for Ireland's Presidency will be agreeing a common EU position for the 2013 UN General Assembly event on the MDGs and developing a position on the post-2015 development framework.

Ireland will host a meeting of EU Development Ministers early in 2013, which will be an opportunity for substantive discussion on the post-2015 development framework. There are also plans to host a high-level conference in April to discuss issues relating to hunger, nutrition and climate change.

These are unique opportunities for all members of the Consortium to work together to influence the EU level discussions on what we want to see in the post-2015 framework. To get involved in this national discussion contact: [www.dochas.ie](http://www.dochas.ie) [www.worldwewant.ie](http://www.worldwewant.ie)

### *2015 and the European Year for Development Cooperation*

The European Parliament has agreed to call for 2015 to be designated the European Year for Development Cooperation. As the year of expiry of the MDGs, and with many European Union States falling off track on anti-poverty aid targets, 2015 could generate public awareness of the EU's global role in international development. A web portal has been launched where EU citizens can have their say:  
<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.ey2015>

## Civil Society Involvement

Civil society organisations that want to take part in lobbying the EU can do so by joining **CONCORD**, the European confederation of Relief and Development NGOs that represents over 1,800 NGOs across Europe:  
<http://www.concordeurope.org>

**Beyond 2015** is a global civil society campaign with over 380 members and is open to all to join. They publish position papers on their website and will be carrying out their own thematic consultations in 30 countries. Organisations can join in this civil society consultation and there is a toolkit available to assist with developing a position on the vision, purpose, principles and criteria for any new framework post-2015. The findings will feed into the UN consultations. The toolkit and information on how to get involved are available from the website:  
<http://www.beyond2015.org>

**The UK Gender and Development Network** has drawn up briefings on gender equality in the post 2015 agenda to ensure that women's and girls' rights are part of debates on post-2015. GADN members will organise and attend consultation events to ensure a gender perspective is included in discussions and recommendations. The Consortium is linked up with this network and will investigate joint advocacy opportunities in the run up to 2015:  
<http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk>

The Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence is committed to engage in these different debates and will encourage its partners to participate in the consultation process in different countries. We also call on civil society to take part in up-coming events in Ireland and influence the post 2015 agenda to include a strong gender perspective and commitments to address gender based violence.

The Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence comprises Irish Human Rights, humanitarian and development organisations together with Irish Aid a directorate of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Irish Defence Forces working together to tackle gender based violence.

For more information on the Consortium please go to [www.gbv.ie](http://www.gbv.ie)

