



# VAW

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMAN

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

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## **Tackling Violence Against Women and Children through A Development Lens**

Today, women and children are recognized not only as rights holders, but also as citizens able to contribute to the prosperous development of society, should they be given opportunities for development. Furthermore, gender equality, ending violence against women and children, and empowerment of women and children are universally agreed to be crucial elements in achieving sustainable development, as reflected in the SDGs, which were adopted in 2015. The SDGs framework addresses commitments to invest in development aspects of everyone, including children and women. For example, Goals 1, 2, 3, 10, and 17 provide that every child and woman should survive and thrive. Goals 1, 4, 10 and 17 emphasize gender equality and education for all. Goals 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 16 and 17 commit stakeholders to protecting all woman and children from violence and exploitation.

Despite considerable improvement, challenges still remain and they require ongoing efforts. According to the "Knowing Violence in Childhood Global Report" launched at the high-level meeting at United Nations Headquarters in November 2017, around 1.7 billion children experience violence globally. This is coupled with the UN statistics for 2015 showing that less than 40% of the women who experienced violence sought some sort of help.

Additionally, in reference to violence in the context of trafficking in persons, the UNOD Global Report on Trafficking in Persons in 2016 showed that 79% of trafficking victims detected globally are women and children, and that the average conviction number is low, despite improvements in law.

Violence should be dealt with through the improvement of access to justice, alongside improvement of access to development. To boost the capacity of the criminal justice system to tackle the vulnerability and sensitivity of children and women, the TIJ seeks to promote implementation of relevant international standards and norms, particularly the UN Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children and against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. These UN instruments provide a framework for criminal justice systems to set and achieve standards in protecting children and women from violence, through comprehensive prevention with the proper focus on the needs of victims and witnesses of violence, and proper safeguards for children in contact with the justice system.



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Beyond the criminal justice system, the 'development-led approach' helps to address social inequality, poverty, and the lack of access to education and economic opportunities which are the driving forces pushing individuals to break the law and, at the same time, make certain members of society more vulnerable to victimization. In the 2017 report produced jointly by TIJ and UNODC, which looked at the phenomenon of trafficking in persons in Southeast Asia within the broad context of migration, it was found that many women and children who are victims of sexual abuses and labour exploitation come from poor rural areas, where their families do not own land or have suffered from poor harvests or crop losses. This portrays the root causes of problem which form a complex mix of push factors and vulnerabilities which make women and children prone to abuse and exploitation.

To tackle these root causes of violence and victimization, we seek to promote access to development by women and children and to envisage their role as key contributors to the justice system and to the development of society. For women, challenges in accessing justice are rooted in inequality and the resulting discrimination between men and women gender stereotyping. To deal with inequality, one good approach is to work on the empowerment of women. The SDGs, in particular Goal 5, emphasize the empowerment approach which involves a process of systematic change through which women are enabled to exercise and advance their rights and interests using the law, together with access to educational and economic opportunities. To depict this in a concrete way, one can think about providing opportunities for women to become players in the criminal justice system, or "justice makers." For women to fully enjoy gender equality, it is recognized that fair and equal treatment is linked to broader questions of social justice. This includes the need to have more women as practitioners and administrators in justice systems. Women justice makers are agents of change and most of them contribute to improving the relationship between women and the justice system.

Against such a complex reality, we can realize that the law and the criminal justice system alone may not provide a durable solution for preventing and responding to violence and crime. Access to social and economic development and legal empowerment should therefore be part of a strategy to protect and to promote the rights of women and children.