



Beijing+30: From Words to Action

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

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UN Women

New York, July 2025

INTRODUCTION

In 1995, 189 governments unanimously adopted the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** (BPfA) as a groundbreaking and far-reaching framework for the achievement of gender equality and the realization of the human rights of women and girls. The commitments made in the Platform for Action were forward thinking for its time, and many of the critical areas of concern identified in the Platform for Action remain pertinent for responding to the complex challenges of today, particularly the commitment to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

At the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), Member States reaffirmed their commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action through the adoption by consensus of a powerful **Political Declaration**. This Beijing+30 series highlights key normative developments, best practice approaches and case studies of promising initiatives alongside key tools and resources to support implementation. It also highlights critical gaps, challenges and priority actions needed to accelerate efforts to eliminate VAWG.

It also complements and builds on the "**Beijing+30 Action Agenda**", particularly Action 3, For All Women and Girls: Zero Violence and offers evidence-based policy and programmatic solutions for member states who are invited to make concrete and transformative commitments to advance gender equality at the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Beijing+30 in September 2025.

ACT to End Violence Against Women Programme

This paper was developed under the ACT to End Violence against Women and Girls programme funded by the EU. ACT is a new game-changing commitment between the European Commission and UN Women as co-leaders of the Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence (GBV), in collaboration with the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. The **ACT shared advocacy agenda** is elevating the priorities and amplifying the voices of feminist women's rights movements and provides a collaborative framework focused on common priorities, strategies and actions.

To accelerate efforts in eliminating VAWG, ACT is calling for:

1. **Bold investments in prevention and responses to end violence against women and girls (VAWG);**
2. **Strengthened financing, protection and support to women's rights organizations;**
3. **Enhanced accountability, access to justice and the full and effective implementation of laws to prevent and respond to VAWG.**

These advocacy priorities reflect the core demands of the **Beijing+30 Action Agenda** and contribute to collective efforts toward the **High-level Meeting of the General Assembly in September 2025**, where Member States are called upon to make concrete and transformative commitments to advance gender equality.

INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND STANDARDS

International norms and standards call for action to prevent violence against women and girls. In 1995, the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** (Platform for Action) recognized violence against women and girls (VAWG) as a violation of human rights and as an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development, and peace. The Platform for Action further recognized VAWG as a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women, requiring holistic and multisectoral approaches to prevent violence before it happens. The Platform for Action urges States to formulate, resource, and implement, at all appropriate levels, plans of action to eliminate and prevent violence against women.

CSW57

Subsequently, in 2013, the **Agreed Conclusions of the 57th Commission on the Status of Women** represented a significant advance in international norms regarding the prevention of VAWG. The Agreed Conclusions called on States and other actors to take integrated action to address the structural and underlying causes and risk factors to prevent violence against women and girls, including specific action to, inter alia, achieve gender equality across all spheres of life, actions to ensure women's economic empowerment, policies to transform social norms, educational programmes including on comprehensive sexuality education, awareness raising and communication mobilization programmes.

CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35

CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, further called on States to implement a range of measures to prevent VAWG, including, inter alia, measures that address the underlying causes of gender-based violence against women, including patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes, inequality in the family and the neglect or denial of women's human rights, and measures that to address and eradicate the stereotypes, prejudices, customs and practices which condone or promote gender-based violence against women.

The Platform for Action's vision of eliminating VAWG can only be achieved if we stop violence from happening in the first place through prevention efforts. In addition to the international standards calling for action, global evidence also shows that VAWG is preventable and that investing in it will have an important multiplier effect across all areas of human rights, peace, and sustainable development.

Importantly, a focus on prevention does not mean that national efforts on response and support to survivors are not critical. These require continued resourcing, prioritisation, and coordination. Support and justice for survivors also contributes to the prevention of VAWG in their own right by stopping the escalation of early signs of violence or preventing violence from reoccurring.



PROMISING PRACTICE APPROACHES

Since the Beijing Platform for Action was adopted in 1995, countries have increasingly adopted actions to prevent VAWG. The 30-year review of the Platform for Action in 2024 found that, **seventy-five per cent** of member states had **introduced** or **strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls**, up from 67 per cent in 2019.¹

KEY RESOURCE

The [Global Database on Violence against Women](#) is the official one-stop site for information reported by States on measures taken to address violence against women, including through prevention.

Adopting a multisectoral approach to prevent violence against women

There is growing evidence that adequately funded coordinated national action plan approaches to prevention can have a tangible, widespread and sustained impact. Evidence shows that whole of **government and comprehensive action** to end violence against women is more effective. For instance, the rates of intimate partner violence are 2.5 times lower in countries with comprehensive prevention and response measures. Whole of **government national action plans** on VAWG can **unlock financing** from different sectors (child protection, health, education, social protection etc.) and to ensure the implementation of whole of society prevention and response strategies.

KEY RESOURCE

The 2023 '[Together for prevention: Handbook on multisectoral national action plans to prevent violence against women and girls](#)' focuses on how to design NAPs with a specific focus on prevention

[UN Women's 2015 framework to underpin action to prevent violence against women](#) provides guidance on addressing root causes and risk factors through prevention interventions

Preventing violence against women and girls requires addressing its root causes and risk factors.² Evidence from numerous studies on what works to prevent violence against women calls for focus to be placed on multi-pronged interventions at different levels –

individual/relationship, community and societal – to transform unequal gendered power relations and address gender inequality as well as intersectional discrimination. Prevention is about changing the norms, practices, and structures that produce gender inequality and underpin the causes of VAWG, as well as addressing other risk factors that interact with gender inequality to increase the likelihood of VAWG taking place.



UN WOMEN/DZILAM MÉNDEZ

Developed in 2019, the **RESPECT women framework** to prevent violence against women and girls has recommended action-oriented steps to design, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and scale-up interventions and programs based on a public health and human rights approach. The Framework proposes the implementation of strategies in seven areas:

1. Relationship skills strengthened
2. Empowerment of women
3. Services ensured
4. Poverty reduced
5. Environments made safe
6. Child and adolescent abuse prevented
7. Transformed attitudes, beliefs, and norms

KEY RESOURCE

UN Women and WHO's **RESPECT Framework** (2019), along with the **implementation guidance**, provides recommended action-oriented steps to design, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate and scale-up interventions and programmes and the site contains support resources in several areas

It further outlines a series of critical areas for investment for these seven strategies to be effective:



meaningful
PARTICIPATION
of civil society and experts
in the design of prevention
strategies and plans

an
**ENABLING
ENVIRONMENT**



with laws and policies grounded in the principles
of non-discrimination and equality and investments
in women's rights organizations

A WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY



approach driving change
at societal, community,
interpersonal, and individual
levels across all settings

A COORDINATED

whole-of-government and
multisectoral approach
where various government
entities, civil society and
experts work together



Sectoral Approaches to Preventing VAWG

There is also a growing body of guidance to support a **whole of society** approach to preventing VAWG where every part of the community plays its part. This can be achieved by working to integrate VAWG prevention across different sectors, such as education (**schools** and **universities**), **sport**, **workplaces** and the **media**.

There is also the opportunity to integrate VAWG prevention in the **response to climate change** and through interventions such as **social protection**. UN Women also work with local governments to integrate VAWG prevention and women's safety in the planning of cities, public spaces and transport systems through the **Safe Cities** and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls Programme.

Social Norm Change as a critical path for preventing VAWG

Discriminatory social norms are a powerful driver of pervasive violence against women and girls. While there has been much focus on work to change the attitudes and behaviours of individuals, there is growing evidence that to bring about sustainable and transformative social norm change, engagement is needed at the level of social institutions, notably in families and communities, and in the market and the state. The latest research shows that integrated approaches are needed that transform discriminatory narratives through whole-of-society approaches; that make tangible changes in women's lives through legal reform, opportunities and access to services; and that strengthen feminist movements.³

Examples⁴ that have brought these three approaches together to shift discriminatory social norms include the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, where the provision of comprehensive psychosocial care services combined with whole of community healing from conflict-related trauma and support for income generation for survivors and their families has changed norms governing spousal relationships, including on consensual sex, and women's role in decision-making on household resources. In **India**, community organising over 30 years has sought to shift discriminatory norms on girls' education and early marriage, through engaging the whole of the community to create egalitarian narratives about girls' rights, engaging with local government officials and religious leaders to ensure school attendance, and empowering adolescent girls to understand and advocate for their own rights. In **Egypt**, feminist scholars and activists mobilised a diverse coalition of activists, lawyers, government officials, civic leaders, legislators, and scholars and worked with high-ranking religious leaders and officials, to promote gender equality in family laws, including the right to divorce.

WORKING WITH MEN AND BOYS TO TRANSFORM HARMFUL SOCIAL NORMS AND PATRIARCHAL MASCULINITIES

Transforming harmful masculinities is key to preventing VAWG. UN Women's approach is to advance our work with men and boys across individual, community, institutional, and societal levels.

Through the **DRILS initiative** (Dialogue, Reflection, Insight, Learning, and Sharing), supported by the Government of Iceland, UN Women engaged six country and regional offices—Ecuador, Moldova, Morocco, the Regional Office for the Arab States, Nigeria, and Tanzania—in a reflective learning process to identify key sites for change. The initiative generated actionable recommendations that are shaping UN Women's work, including a strengthened focus on addressing technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TF GBV) and its links to harmful masculinities. Building on this, in partnership with Equimundo, UN Women is studying how online misogyny, gendered hate speech, and harmful content shape norms and drive VAWG. The research will examine perpetrators, networks, pathways to violence, and prevention strategies, including using digital platforms to promote positive masculinities.

Additionally, UN Women has partnered with the MenEngage Alliance to document best practices for engaging men and boys in VAWG prevention. The **Peer-to-Peer Learning and Sharing Process** (CoLabs), facilitate global knowledge exchange among MenEngage members and partners to inform the development of program guidance notes and synthesis papers, which will serve as evolving toolkits for transformative masculinity programming and advocacy.



STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENTS

The presence of a strong and autonomous women's rights movement is the single most critical factor to drive progress in ending violence against women.⁴ There has been growing focus of the role of women's rights organizations in ending VAWG, with evidence showing that large-scale reductions in VAWG are possible through multi-sectoral coordinated actions of governments and civil society, and intensive advocacy efforts and media campaigns carried out by feminist organizations.⁵

Women's rights organizations not only play a key role in advocacy for policy and legislative change, but also carry deep expertise in the design and delivery of prevention interventions and support services across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, often with a focus on an intersectional approach.⁶

Yet in 2023, only

5% of ODA



allocated to work on ending violence against women went to women's rights organizations.⁷

The EU-UN Women **ACT programme** focuses on strengthening women's rights movements, coalition building and global advocacy on ending violence against women and will generate more evidence of the critical role of women's rights movement in preventing and responding to VAWG.



UN WOMEN/MAGFUZUR RAHMAN SHANA

COMMON GAPS AND CHALLENGES IN PREVENTING VAWG

Successive reviews of the implementation of the Platform for Action have identified key gaps and challenges for prevention. Many countries continue to implement piece-meal and short-term approaches with a limited focus on awareness-raising, rather than comprehensive, long-term approaches focussed on social norm transformation. Effective prevention work requires sustained political commitment from donors and national governments, and a financial model that will catalyse transformative change across regions and countries. However, the current level of funding is not sufficient to deliver the high-quality, evidence-based prevention programming and policies that will have an impact across entire populations.

KEY RESOURCE

[Doing Violence Prevention Well: Matching Aspirations with Funding Timeframes](#)

Broader societal shifts such as growing backlash against women's rights, increasing misogyny among young men and the expansion of access to harmful pornography also presents a significant challenge to prevention efforts.⁸ Finally, while there is growing evidence that VAWG is preventable, the evidence of what works is limited

to smaller scale programs in specific contexts rather than population-wide approaches.

A global systematic review of reviews to update the RESPECT women framework reveals that despite growing evidence in support of the framework's strategies, significant gaps in the evidence base persist. Further research is needed to better understand what works to prevent VAWG across different contexts, settings and populations particularly amongst marginalized populations. The review also calls for the next round of investments in the VAWG prevention field to focus on scaling up promising prevention strategies including through the integration of prevention interventions into broader public health and social welfare systems.⁹

Finally, evidence of what works to prevent violence against women is not available for all forms of VAWG. For instance, there is very limited evidence of what works to prevent trafficking in women and girls, or new and emerging forms of VAWG such as online and technology facilitated VAWG which results in piecemeal strategies and interventions. These gaps need to be urgently filled through greater investments in research and evaluation of promising practices and through leveraging technology and **innovation** including AI for positive social change and using digital tools for prevention and responses.



ACTION PRIORITIES TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE PREVENTION TO END VAWG IN A GENERATION

1

Ensure adequate and sustained funding for evidence-based, whole-of-government, comprehensive prevention strategies.

2

Foster leadership and agency of CSOs, to champion prevention efforts and to continue implementing prevention interventions and innovating including through practice-based learnings.

3

Promote long-term evidence and practice-based approaches to transform discriminatory social norms and harmful masculinities.

4

Invest in research to inform the adaption and scale-up of effective interventions to deliver population-wide prevention with a whole-of-society approach.

5

Harness technology and innovation to adapt evidence-based prevention interventions for online and digital contexts to accelerate progress in eliminating VAWG.

KEY RESOURCES

The [UN Women Knowledge Hub](#) provides evidence-based guidance and practical resources for practitioners and policymakers on preventing and responding to VAWG.

The [UN Trust Fund \(UNTF\) to end Violence against Women Evidence and Learning Hub](#) provides evaluation reports on preventing VAWG

The [Prevention Collaborative](#) knowledge hub serves as a trusted resource for the latest evidence on cutting-edge

prevention programmes informed by research-based evidence, practice-based knowledge, and feminist principles.

The [What Works to Prevent VAWG Evidence Hub](#) shares findings from the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID)'s global research and innovation programme across 13 countries

Spotlight Initiative [Compendium](#) of Innovative and Good Practices and Lessons Learned

END NOTES

¹ [E/CN.6/2025/3](#)

² UN Women (2015) A framework to underpin action to prevent violence against women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/11/prevention-framework>

³ UN-Women, Ideologies, institutions and power: Addressing social norms implicated in gender equality and women's empowerment. A framework for UN-Women (forthcoming).

⁴ Aziz-Suleyman, A. and S. Gasibirege. Forthcoming. "How Change Happens: Learning from Knowledge and Practices to Address Social Norms

in the Pursuit of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls in the Global South." Paper commissioned by UN-Women; Wazir, R. and S. Sinha. 2024. "Recasting Social Norms to Universalize Education for Adolescent Girls: The Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation Experience." UN-Women Discussion Paper Series. New York: UN-Women; Sharafeldin, M. Forthcoming. "How Does Change Happen? Social Norms, Religion and Family Laws in the Middle East and North Africa Region." UN-Women Discussion Paper Series. New York: UN-Women.

⁵ Mary Ellsberg, Margarita Quintanilla & William J. Ugarte (2022) Pathways to change: Three decades of feminist research and activism to end violence against women in Nicaragua, Global Public Health, DOI: 10.1080/17441692.2022.2038652

⁶ UN Women (2024). *Progress Through Partnership: UN Women's work with women's rights organizations and coalitions for strengthening movements to end violence against women and girls*.

⁷ UN Women and Generation Equality (n.d.). *Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence: Increasing Support to Women's Rights Movements* [PDF].

⁸ [E/CN.6/2025/3](#)

⁹ Ullman C, Amin A, Bourassa A, et al. Interventions to prevent violence against women and girls globally: a global systematic review of reviews to update the RESPECT women framework. *BMJ Public Health* 2025

Full list of UN Women's prevention resources

- [A Framework to Underpin Action to Prevent VAWG](#)
- [RESPECT Framework](#)
- [RESPECT Implementation Package](#)
- [Together for Prevention](#): Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls
- [Doing Violence Prevention Well](#): Matching Aspirations with Funding Timeframes
- [Tackling violence against women and girls in sport](#): A handbook for policy makers and sports practitioners
- [Innovation and prevention of violence against women](#)
- [CSW66 agreed conclusions](#) and ways forward for addressing VAWG and climate change linkages in policies, decision making and programming
- [Tackling violence against women and girls in the context of climate change](#)
- [Transforming patriarchal masculinities](#): Learning from practice: Lessons from UN Women DRILS initiative (Dialogue, Reflection, Insight, Learning & Sharing)
- [Voices against violence](#)
- [Addressing violence against women through social protection](#): A review of the evidence
- [Mapping the nexus between media reporting of violence against girls](#)
- [Dismantling Gender Stereotypes in Media, Marketing and advertising](#): Creating an Equitable Future in Asia-Pacific
- [Making Progress in Prevention Possible](#) – A monitoring framework for the prevention of violence against women and girls in the Asia-Pacific region
- [Guidelines to support engagement with Traditional and Religious leaders](#)
- [Prevention: Violence against women and girls and COVID-19](#)
- [The big conversation](#): Handbook to address violence against women in and through the media
- [Handbook: Addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work](#)
- [Female genital mutilation/cutting and violence against women and girls](#): Strengthening the policy linkages between different forms of violence
- [Preventing violence against women in elections](#): A programming guide
- [Guidance note on campus violence prevention and response](#)
- [Global guidance on addressing school-related gender-based violence](#)
- [Package of essentials for addressing violence against women](#)
- [Handbook: Addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work](#)

UN WOMEN EXISTS TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS.

As the lead UN entity on gender equality and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, we shift laws, institutions, social behaviors and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls.

Our partnerships with governments, women's movements and the private sector coupled with our coordination of the broader United Nations translate progress into lasting changes. We make strides forward for women and girls in four areas: leadership, economic empowerment, freedom from violence, and women, peace and security as well as humanitarian action.

UN Women keeps the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.



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