



60th Commission on the Status of Women

Side Event

Children: invisible victims of gender violence

March, Wednesday 16th, 2016,

16:30-18.00hs

Venue: “Instituto Cervantes”, New York

211 E 49th St. NY 10017 (<http://nyork.cervantes.es/es>)

The eradication of violence against women is considered a top political priority in Spain. The Spanish Parliament and Government, but also society as a whole, believe that violence against women is an indisputable “affair of State” requiring unity beyond any political debate outside the honest will of constructing and improving. The huge progress made by Spain in less than two decades in this field in building a consolidated system of protection and assistance in cases of gender-based violence, provides a useful experience to be shared in the international arena.

Addressing violence against women has experienced in recent years an important impulse also in Latin America. In the legal field, advances have been made with the enactment of comprehensive protection laws and the regulation of femicide or feminicide, with an increase also of protection and accompanying measures in the judicial process. To a lesser extent, progress has been made in the field of economic and social policies, and available information indicates that the gap between the legal framework and the implementation on the ground remains a great challenge for Latin American Governments and societies. The multiple manifestations of violence against women and the complex set of causes and consequences of this violation of human rights, require determined and cross-cutting approaches. In some countries discussion is currently taking place regarding monetary pensions for children minors of murdered mothers, as well as paid leaves for women workers who have suffered violence and need time, among other measures, for legal proceedings, medical consultations or house searching. Women's independence, gender equality and sustainable development, demand once and for all to “cut the Gordian knot” of the everyday violence that affects them.

Increasingly, new ways of addressing and combatting gender-based violence are being explored, including in Norway, taking into account the secondary effects on children of victims of such violence. Gender-based violence, is not only a violation of basic human rights and devastating to the victims of such violence, but also entails great human and economic costs for the society. Since gender-based and domestic violence

often is kept out of the public eye, it is crucial to coordinate efforts among various actors and public bodies to prevent and combat this violence. Despite a range of initiatives over the last few years, gender-based violence remains a phenomenon that affects many women in all countries.

Some lessons learned: First of all, the Spanish society and public authorities consider the problem of violence against women as an issue of a public and political nature for three main reasons: it is not a private issue anymore; society is committed to eradicate it; and, data are available. It is not a private issue and exclusively a women's concern. **Public visibility of violence against women and the involvement of society and authorities in the task and responsibility of putting a stop to this problem are now irreversible in Spain.** Media, institutions, women's associations, committed people and several organizations of civil society have brought this issue to the fore of debate and public agenda.

Thus, Spain has faced up to the problem, by institutionalizing it and engaging in an exercise of recognition of the need to tackle it. Society is now committed to eradicate it, as available data shows. In Spain, 92% of society disapproves gender-based violence, whereas sexual and physical abuse is rejected by virtually the entire population (98%). For that very reason, Spain collects and disseminates data on gender-based violence (abuse, according to our law) and violence against women. Every victim is known and there are registers and administrative data systems collecting and disseminating data systematically.

Secondly, Spain tackles violence against women through a comprehensive and holistic approach followed by promoting the eradication of violence directed at women. *Organic Law 1/2004, of 28 December, on Comprehensive Protection Measures against Gender-based Violence* puts forward a multidisciplinary and comprehensive response encompassing measures of prevention and social awareness-raising and protection and assistance to victims and their children. Since the passing of this Law, **Spain has been permanently developing and improving a wide and complete legal framework as well as a public system of resources to face this terrible reality.**

However, the consolidation of policies to eradicate violence against women in Spain also requires identifying the pending challenges:

The **first challenge is to breach the silence**: Notwithstanding the efforts that been made, silence still goes with the violence suffered by women. In Spain, 20% of women who have experienced violence have filed formal complaints (compared to 14 % on average in the rest of the European countries). This is why one of the current areas of work included in the National Strategy for the Eradication of Violence against Women 2013-2016 is: "Breaking the *silence*, the *accomplice* of the abuse", that focuses on working on social awareness through several actions, within the framework of the awareness-raising campaign "There is a way out".

The **second challenge is trying to give a specific answer to every woman**: a woman, an answer/a solution, the need to increase personalisation with the aim of accomplishing the best and most effective assistance for women.

The **third challenge is to address the groups particularly vulnerable to violence**: youth and other vulnerable groups such as disabled women, women from rural areas and immigrant women.

In regard to minors, in accordance with the Spanish "National Strategy for the Eradication of Violence against Women 2013-2016", legislation protecting children and adolescents was adopted in 2015, to reinforce and strengthen the institutional response to prevent and protect children of women victims of domestic and intimate partner violence, and to recognize minor children as victims of gender violence. In

addition, as a new development, judges are required to take a decision on the precautionary and security measures, specifically the civil measures related to minors (including parental rights or child custody suspension and the parental visiting, stay and communication arrangements suspension).

The Spanish International Cooperation considers gender equality as one of its hallmarks, including the gender perspective as a horizontal and sectoral priority in the II and III Master Plans, in the Gender in Development Strategy, as well as in the implementation of the Action Plan: Women and Peacebuilding, and the Sectoral Action Plan on Gender in Development. The IV Master Plan 2013-2016 incorporates the promotion of women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment as one of the eight guidelines of the Spanish Cooperation for the period 2013-2016, and includes violence against women and girls as one of the worst forms of discrimination. That is the reason why the Spanish Cooperation incorporates specific action lines and gives a strong support to multiple bilateral projects of field offices and Spanish NGDO, as well as to the most important UN funds and multilateral programs, such as the **Trust Fund to End Violence against Women or the Women's Safe Cities program**.

During 2014, the Strategy for Childhood of the Spanish International Cooperation was developed with the support of UNICEF-Spain and the group of NGDO for childhood, which was presented in 2015. It includes, in its different objectives, specific proposals to fight violence against women and children. The strategy is the result of a broad consensus and the support of all stakeholders represented in the Cooperation Council.

The aim of this side event is to provide an insight on good practices and challenges addressing violence against women, including a special reference to the situation of children as victims, recognizing that there is still a long way to a society free of violence against women, which may and must become a reality in Spain in the 21st century.

Panelists:

Ms. Susana Camarero, Secretary of State for Social Services and Equality, Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain.

Ms. Tone Skogen, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Norwegian Government

Ms. María Nieves Rico, Director of the Division for Gender Affairs of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Representative Italy (tbc)

Ms. Cristina Juarranz de la Fuente, General Director of Multilateral, Horizontal and Financial Cooperation, Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development.

Ms. Rosa Urbón Izquierdo, Director of the Institute of Women and for Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain.



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to the United Nations