

INQUIRY INTO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND GENDER INEQUALITY

Submission by International Women's Development Agency to the Finance and Public Administration and References Committee

1. Introduction

[International Women's Development Agency](#) (IWDA) is the leading Australian agency entirely focussed on women's rights and gender equality in the Asia Pacific region. IWDA works in partnership with women's rights organisations and advocates to create empowering and transformative change for women. Our vision is for a just, equitable and sustainable world where women enjoy the full range of human rights, where women and men interact with dignity and respect, and where women have an effective voice in economic, cultural, civil and political systems and processes.

IWDA welcomes this opportunity to respond to the call for submissions from the Finance and Public Administration and References Committee Inquiry into domestic violence and gender inequality.

In the context of the new Global Goals for Sustainable Development ('the Global Goals'), establishing a framework to coordinate action across government on violence against women and girls (VAWG) is particularly important. As part of Global Goal 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment we now have explicit targets to eliminate violence against women which require action by the Australian Government both at home and abroad (Targets 5.2 and 5.3). Meeting our commitments under these goals requires that national work goes hand in hand with action on Australia's commitments to address VAWG women abroad as a priority international issue.

Our submission is structured as follows:

- a) A global problem—domestic violence and gender inequality: The importance of joining up Australia's efforts to address gender inequality and violence against women domestically and internationally, particularly in the context of the Global Goals.
- b) Evidence from IWDA's work with our partners: the role of gender inequality in all spheres of life in contributing to the prevalence of domestic violence.
- c) The importance of supporting and resourcing women's rights organisations within Australia and through the Australian aid program as a key strategy for tackling the underlying causes of domestic violence.
- d) The need for sustainable and long term resourcing to support commitments on gender equality and violence against women alongside mechanisms which enable detailed tracking of this spend.

2. A global problem—domestic violence and gender inequality

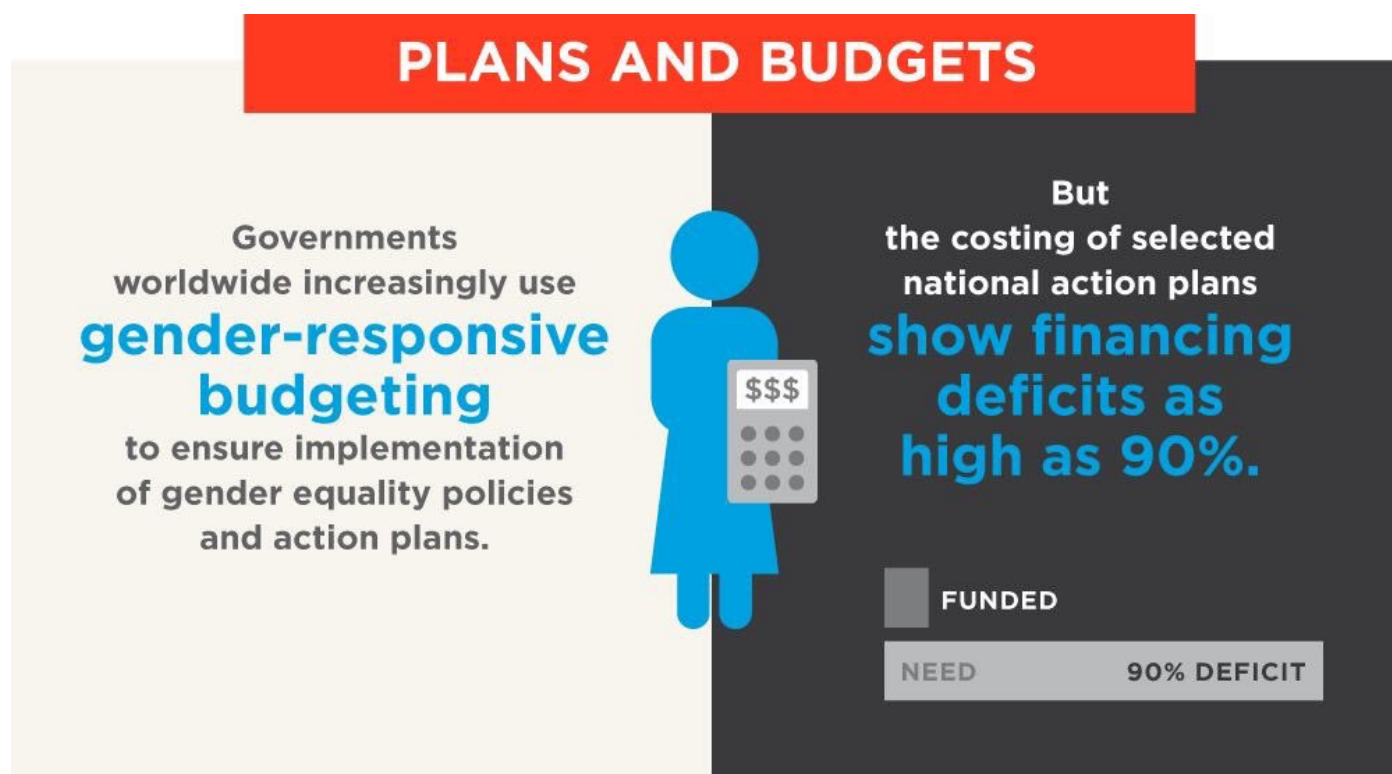
*"Hundreds of millions of women experience some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetimes, and many experience multiple forms over the course of their lives. Violence is not limited to specific regions of the world or to socioeconomic, religious, or ethnic groups."*¹

Violence against women is a global problem. It takes place in all societies and cultures and affects women no matter what their age, race, ability, ethnicity or social origin. Intimate partner violence is pervasive and deeply embedded. Worldwide, it is estimated that 35% of women experience violence in their lifetime and 30% experience intimate partner violence.² A 2014 global study on homicide, found that of all the women killed in 2012, almost half had been killed by their family members or intimate partners, whereas the equivalent figure for male victims was just 6%.³ In the Pacific region, more than 60% of ever-married

women 15–49 years have experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner at some time in their lives.⁴ A World Bank study ranked the Solomon Islands as having the worst rates of sexual violence in the world with the Pacific as the worst region in the world for physical violence against women.⁵ One of IWDA's partners undertook a community survey on violence against women in Jiwaka province, Papua New Guinea, which revealed that violence against women and girls is endemic. The most common form of violence identified by participants was wife beating (32%).⁶

The imperative to address gender inequality and discrimination as the structural causes of violence against women is supported by evidence worldwide.⁷ For example, analysis of data collected in 44 countries showed that gender inequality, including societal norms supporting male authority over women, and discriminatory ownership rights, is associated with intimate partner violence at the country level.⁸ The need to strengthen the interlinkages between gender inequality and violence against women has also been affirmed in Goal 5 of the Global Goals.

Despite this growing evidence base, there remains a significant gap between rhetoric/policy commitment and real change for women and girls. According to the World Bank Business and the Law Report (2015) 46 of the 173 covered economies have yet to enact laws to address domestic violence. Of the economies covered, 95 have laws which cover both physical and sexual violence and 122 cover psychological violence. Economic violence is rarely addressed and is not covered in 94 of the total 173 economies for which data was collected.⁹ The gap between commitment and change is underpinned by resourcing for gender equality work that fails to match the scope and scale of the issues being addressed, as the recent infographic from UN Women below highlights.¹⁰



This gap between commitment and change persists despite evidence of the very significant economic costs of violence, to individual women and girls and to families and economies. Violence reduces women's earnings when they are forced to take time off from work, and increases health care costs, both direct expenditure associated with addressing physical and psychological injury, and related opportunity costs (what the health budget could have been spent on if not absorbed by expenditure that is entirely preventable). In countries such as Tanzania and Vietnam, women exposed to partner violence have higher

work absenteeism, lower productivity, and lower earnings than similar women who are not. Notably, even male perpetrators of partner violence in Vietnam had higher work absenteeism following a violent episode.¹¹

The resources allocated to targeting gender equality and women's empowerment both domestically, and internationally through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), are determined through national budget processes. Australia was once regarded as a leader internationally for its gender-informed policy frameworks and budget processes, providing a model for other countries to adopt. For a short period in the late 1980s to the late 1990s, the Commonwealth Government prepared a Women's Budget Statement (one of the formal, comprehensive annual budget papers tabled in parliament), reporting on the work and activities of every department. Compiling the Women's Budget Statement ensured that there was some formal consideration of the impact of policies, programs, expenditure and savings on women and that these were available for Cabinet to factor into decision-making. The process also signalled to decision makers, administrators and the wider community that the effect of policies and programs on women was an important public policy consideration. Reinstating a whole of government gender budget process would accelerate Australia's efforts to advance gender equality within and beyond our borders and strengthen policy effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

Recommendation 1: A formal Women's Budget Statement (WBS) be reinstated and maintained as part of Australian Government accountability for its commitments to gender equality. Civil society, particularly women's rights organisations, should be formally engaged in the WBS process.

A new context: the Global Goals for Sustainable Development

The Global Goals are the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which expired in 2015. There are 17 universal goals and 169 targets that UN member states have agreed to and will be expected to work towards over the next 15 years. The Global Goals are universal and therefore apply to all countries, both developed and developing. This creates new obligations for Australia to track our progress across government departments and to ensure a coordinated approach across the target areas.

The importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainable development is recognised both in a standalone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment (Goal 5) and in the recognition of gender dimensions in targets across other goals including those related to health, agriculture, education, climate change and economic inequality.

Importantly, as part of Global Goal 5 we now have explicit targets to eliminate VAWG. This underlines the role of government at every level in addressing the underlying causes of domestic violence. Under the first of these targets, governments have agreed to take action to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation (Target 5.2). The second of these targets is focussed on the elimination of harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (Target 5.3). This requires the collection of internationally consistent and comparable prevalence data against these targets.¹²

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development therefore provide us with an important moment to accelerate action on gender inequality and women's empowerment worldwide. Meeting the Australian Government's commitments under these goals requires a coordinated approach across Australia's work – domestically and internationally – to address gender inequality as both a cause and a consequence of violence against women.

Recommendation 2: IWDA submits that effective, coherent action to address the underlying causes of domestic violence and to meet Australia's commitments under the Global Goals requires an integrated and coordinated approach across all levels of government, including Australia's work in this area through the Australian Aid Program.

The Australian Aid Program and efforts focussed on ending VAWG

The Australian Government has committed to being at the forefront of efforts to empower women and girls and promote gender equality in the Indo-Pacific region with ending VAWG identified as a strategic priority. One of the ten performance targets for Australia's aid program is to ensure that more than 80% of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address gender issues in their implementation. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has also recently released its *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy* which includes ending VAWG as one of three priorities which will guide its work on gender equality.

Australia's commitment to addressing VAWG as a priority international issue is reflected in initiatives such as the work of the Ambassador for Women and Girls; DFAT's work with partners in government and civil society in Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, East Timor, and Solomon Islands to deliver coordinated and comprehensive responses to reducing VAWG; Australia's contributions to global and regional trust funds to support groups and organisations working to end VAWG; and Australia's leadership in the Women, Peace and Security space including the *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018*. The Australian Government's program Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (2012-2022) aims to provide support to women for political, economic and social opportunities across 14 Pacific Island countries and to 'reduce violence against women and increase access to support services and to justice for survivors of violence.'¹³

However, currently efforts to address domestic violence within the Australian aid program are siloed from Government efforts to address violence against women within Australia. This limits opportunities for shared learning and the maximisation of resources, tools and expertise. While civil society organisations focused on VAWG take opportunities to collaborate across domestic/international boundaries, such collaboration is constrained when not structured into policy and program architecture.

Opportunities for coordination and collaboration

The potential for shared learning to inform Australia's work on VAWG was identified by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade in its inquiry into Human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean – Asia Pacific region. The inquiry report included a recommendation to review work 'being undertaken in Australia and overseas to address gender-based violence to identify programs of best practice that are culturally appropriate for countries in the Indo-Pacific region.' Chapter 3 of the Inquiry report specifically examines violence against women and girls and IWDA supports the recommendations made by the Inquiry (these are set out in full at **Annexure A of this submission**).¹⁴

Recommendation 3: IWDA recommends that this Inquiry considers and seeks to build on the recent recommendations made by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade to address violence against women and girls.

DFAT has supported evidence-based responses to VAWG across the region including supporting studies by United Nations (UN) Population Fund and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga, Fiji and Kiribati, the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru and Palau.¹⁵ Australia has also supported violence prevalence questions being included in Demographic and Health Surveys in countries including Cambodia and Timor-Leste as well as the United Nations Multi-Country study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific.¹⁶ The Australian Government has also supported ground-breaking research on the nature and prevalence of violence against women with disabilities in Cambodia, in which IWDA was a partner (discussed further below). This work can inform the growth of Australia's own evidence base and the development of internationally consistent and comparable prevalence data against the Global Goals targets.

Australia is also leading the way with national initiatives such as Our Watch, the development of *Change the Story, a shared framework for preventing violence against women and their children*¹⁷ and the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022. This technical knowledge can support the development and implementation of national action plans by our neighbours in the Asia Pacific

region. The research capacity of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)¹⁸ is also contributing to the emerging evidence base in relation to domestic violence prevention which can inform work here in Australia as well as overseas.

Recommendation 4: IWDA recommends that government and civil society work to maximise opportunities for coordination and collaboration to inform Australia's work on violence against women both domestically and internationally including DFAT work in supporting evidence-based responses to VAWG across the Asia Pacific region.

One of the five national priorities for Australia's Second Action Plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022 is to “understand diverse experiences of violence”, with a goal to learn more about and stop violence against women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. DFAT's work overseas can provide important knowledge and evidence to inform cross-government work with women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) marker system used to track overall expenditure through the aid program on gender equality and women's empowerment could be adapted to track spend domestically (this is explained in detail in Section 5 below). Significantly, in May 2015, the DAC introduced a new code in its statistical system (code 15180) to track aid in support of ending VAWG for the first time. Although this system is not perfect (see discussion in **Section 5** below), it does present a mechanism for tracking how funding is supporting gender equality including action on VAWG, and particularly the extent to which funding is reaching women's rights organisations.

Mechanisms for coordination

Released in 2011, the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022 is a twelve year plan to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children. It is broken down into four action plans covering three year periods. To date, the First Action Plan (2010-13) and the Second Action Plan (2013-16) have been released and each contain specific national priorities and actions. The Third Action Plan (2016-2019) is currently being developed.

The National Action Plan emphasises the importance of collaboration and information-sharing. For example, “The National Plan will drive an unprecedented level of collaboration with the broader community and governments who will share information with each other.” (page 11) and “...outcomes for women and their children could be improved by governments working more collaboratively through building the evidence base, sharing information and tracking performance” (page 34). ‘Integrate systems and share information,’ is one of four foundations for change (Second Action Plan page 53) and the National Plan also seeks to foster information sharing between and within governments (page 53). It is IWDA's submission that this information-sharing and collaboration must include the work of DFAT.

The National Plan on violence against women is designed to provide a coordinated framework that improves the scope, focus and effectiveness of governments' actions. The plan recognises and seeks to maintain the strong links that exist between the National Plan and other significant COAG reforms. Alongside this, links should also be drawn between actions by the Australian Government on violence against women overseas. This would enable greater shared learning, and maximise resources and partnership working to meet Australia's commitments on VAWG at national and international levels. It would also provide a clear mandate for Ministers and staff within DFAT, Department of Defence, and Office for Women to provide leadership and accountability in preventing and responding to VAWG as well as a mechanism for the expertise of NGOs, including women's organisations and networks working in Asia and the Pacific, to inform Australian Government policy on VAWG.

Integrating an international component into the Third Action Plan would also bring visibility to existing international actions by Australia on VAWG such as implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of Violence against Women (CEDAW), implementation of the Australian National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, work with and through organisations such as UN Women, work with other governments (with a specific focus on Asia and the

Pacific) to encourage legislative and policy reform to address VAWG, the work of the Ambassador for Women and Girls, and DFAT programmes and funding initiatives which target VAWG. It would also bring existing state, national and international initiatives together within one action plan.

Recommendation 5: An international component should be incorporated into all subsequent action plans under Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children in order to:

- a) **Reflect existing international action by Australia on violence against women and bringing existing state, national and international initiatives together in one place;**
- b) **Provide a framework to coordinate action across Government on violence against women and facilitate shared learning;**
- c) **Enable shared learning, maximisation of resources and partnership working to meet Australia's commitments on violence against women and girls at national and international levels; and**
- d) **Provide a structure for the expertise of NGOs, including women's organisations and networks working in Asia and the Pacific, to inform Australian Government policy on VAWG.**

Learning from other country contexts

The approach of the UK Government provides a helpful example of how existing commitments and international work on VAWG can be integrated into a national action plan to ensure coordination and a mechanism for capturing ongoing work. The relevant sections of the UK plans have been included at **Annexure B** for ease of reference.

The *UK Government's Call to End Violence against Women and Girls: Action Plan (2011)* introduced internationally-focussed actions under the Partnership Working section of the Action Plan. This included actions which reflected obligations under the Convention on the Elimination on all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), implementation of the UK National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council on 1325, and the Department for International Development's (DFID's) programme work and humanitarian response.

In the *2013 revision of the Plan*, the UK identified 'Improved the life chances of victims of violence against women and girls overseas, with this issue an international priority for the UK,' as one of two outcomes for the Partnership Working section of the Plan with a number of corresponding activities which built on the 2011 actions.

In the *2014 version of the Plan*, the Partnership Working section identified the same outcome as 2013 but also included an objective to secure a stand-alone goal on gender equality and a target on ending violence against women and girls in the post 2015 framework to replace the Millennium Development Goals.

3. The role of gender inequality in all spheres of life in contributing to the prevalence of domestic violence

*"The root causes of all forms of violence against women and girls, regardless of settings and contexts, nevertheless remain the unequal power relations between men and women and gender inequality and discrimination in all facets of life."*¹⁹

It is increasingly accepted that VAWG occurs because of gender inequality, discrimination and the unequal power relations between men and women. IWDA's experience working with our partners over the last 30 years has confirmed that domestic violence is both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality. IWDA's work in this area addresses the root cause of VAWG by identifying violence as one result of a power imbalance arising from structural inequalities between men and women. These structural inequalities manifest in relationships of power which result in women having less access to, or control over, resources

and less opportunity to participate in decision making processes. IWDA works with our partners to address this imbalance by empowering women to claim their human rights in all spheres of their lives.

Recommendation 6: Domestic violence must be recognised as both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality. Action to address violence against women both at home and abroad requires empowering women to claim their human rights in all spheres of their lives.

One of the key challenges in relation to efforts to address VAWG are the institutional practices and broader social norms that reinforce and condone violence against women. There is growing evidence that demonstrates that social norms related to male authority, acceptance of wife beating and female subordination affect the overall level of violence against women in different settings. For example, a survey conducted as part of the United Nations multi country study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific found that the most common motivation that men reported for perpetrating both partner and non-partner rape was men's belief that they have the right to sex, regardless of consent.²⁰ According to the Family Health and Safety Study conducted in the Solomon Islands in 2008,²¹ 73% of women respondents believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife under some circumstances and particularly when she is unfaithful or disobedient. Male participants in focus group discussions named the acceptability of gender inequality and violence as the two main reasons for violence against women, and almost all of these men stated that they hit their female partners as an act of disciplining them.²² Violence against women interventions that aim to transform these gender norms and inequalities have proven more effective at reducing violence. Emerging evidence and insights suggest 'that in order to shift harmful social norms programmes need to: a) shift social expectations not just individual attitudes, b) publicise the change and c) catalyse and reinforce new norms and behaviours.'²³

Recommendation 7: Investment should be made in interventions that aim to transform institutional practices and broader social norms that reinforce and condone violence against women as these have proven more effective at reducing violence.

IWDA's work on advancing women's rights and gender equality is focused in three thematic areas – women's economic empowerment; women's safety and security; and women's civil and political participation. Across these areas of work, violence against women is both a fundamental barrier to change for women and girls and a potential consequence of women's empowerment and challenging prevailing norms.

IWDA and the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia program at the Australian National University are currently conducting research funded by DFAT to understand how economic inclusion and empowerment initiatives can affect women's experience of violence.²⁴ The broader development literature and the emerging research findings in the Solomon Islands²⁵, highlight the importance of understanding the interconnectedness between women's economic empowerment programming and violence against women. Women's economic empowerment programming often challenges existing discriminatory gender norms. This can decrease the risk of violence by increasing women's economic and social power, but can also threaten women's safety and security if men respond with violent backlash as patriarchal systems are challenged.²⁶ The practical implications are two-fold. Firstly, efforts to prevent violence against women must consider the economic security of women and the ways in which economic inequality is a cause and a consequence of violence (see Figure 1). Secondly, economic empowerment programming must acknowledge the impact of violence against women on women's economic security and integrate efforts to prevent violence against women.

Figure 1: The relationship between economic empowerment & violence against women



Violence against women exists as a fundamental barrier to women's participation and influence in civil and political life. In addition, women can often face increased violence as they move further into political and public life.²⁷ Female voters are four times as likely as men to be targeted for intimidation in elections in fragile and transitional states.²⁸

The impact of violence constricts women's social and political empowerment and severely limits freedom of movement and autonomy in decision making. It is no coincidence that Papua New Guinea currently has one of the lowest rates of representation of women in elected leadership positions and alarmingly high levels of violence against women.²⁹ Currently only 3 of the 109 seats in the PNG National Parliament are occupied by women. Of the 325 Local Level Government Presidents, only 3 are women.³⁰ IWDA's submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into the delivery and effectiveness of Australia's bilateral aid program in Papua New Guinea contains specific recommendations in relation to violence against women, which this Inquiry may wish to consider.³¹

Greater numbers of women in governments have been linked to lower levels of corruption and strengthened democratic processes. Women have historically and consistently played important roles in peace-building processes worldwide.³² Research has shown that female parliamentarians are more likely to focus on social issues such as child care, parental leave, reproductive rights and violence against women and girls.³³

Recommendation 8: Violence against women must be understood as both a fundamental barrier to change for women and girls and as a potential consequence of women's empowerment.

IWDA supports practical programs and policy influencing to address violence against women across our work with partners. This has included supporting the establishment and expansion of women's human rights defender networks in Papua New Guinea, providing expert technical advice to the Let's Keep Our Families Safe Program in Solomon Islands (funded by the Australian Aid Program); and supporting partners in Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Myanmar in addressing violence against women including through direct support to survivors as well as legislative advocacy. Results of this have included successful advocacy to government on resourcing support to women survivors of violence (Papua New Guinea), as well as achieving just outcomes for women within legal systems (Timor-Leste). In Cambodia and Myanmar,

results have included providing women with safe space to recover from violence, and supporting long term recovery through vocational training and development opportunities.

Women and girls experience violence in different ways at different points in their lifetimes. However, efforts in relation to VAWG has largely overlooked multiple discriminations, including in regard to women with disabilities. IWDA and our partners spent three years researching the link between disability and violence for women in Cambodia in a participatory action research project, *Triple Jeopardy*.³⁴ Cambodian women with disabilities experience multiple disadvantages resulting from the interplay between gender, disability and poverty. The research has found that women with disabilities face similar levels of sexual, physical and emotional violence by partners to non-disabled women but endure much higher levels of all forms of family violence. They suffer sexual violence perpetrated by family members at a rate five times higher than women without disabilities and are much more likely to be insulted, made to feel bad about themselves, belittled and intimidated. Few women ever seek support from NGOs for the violence they experience. These findings, building on scarce developing country evidence, highlight the unique vulnerabilities of women with disabilities to violence, and the barriers to seeking support. Training resources, guidelines and advocacy developed as part of the research aim to improve access and assist specialist and mainstream services to address these issues more effectively and could be adapted to inform work in the Australian context. This would, together with investment in further development of the evidence base on violence against women with disabilities, extend the value of Australia's initial leadership in this area and affirm the commitment to ending VAWG in their diversity.

Recommendation 9: IWDA recommends that the Australian Government support the further development of the evidence base on violence against women with disabilities, and promote an inclusive approach to the collection of violence prevalence data.

4. Resourcing women's rights organisations and networks: a key strategy for addressing the underlying causes of domestic violence

Significantly, investing in women's rights organisations can impact VAWG at multiple levels due to their focus on women-led solutions that are firmly rooted in local contexts. A growing evidence base demonstrates the reach and transformation that is possible when long term and serious investment is made in women's organisations working to build women's collective power for change.³⁵ Research in 70 countries across four decades found that the mobilisation of women's organisations and movements is more important for tackling violence against women and girls than a nation's income, progressive political parties, or the representation of women in politics.³⁶

Why does supporting women's rights organisations matter?

- Proven record of achieving change
- Knowledge of local context and communities
- Supporting women, including marginalised women, to be heard
- Providing a transformative alternative to mainstream projects and services
- Contributing to collective action and change through movements and networks

Despite their proven record of achieving change for women's rights and gender equality, women's rights organisations and networks remain under-resourced and are often marginalised from decision making processes. In 2011, the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) completed a global survey of 1119 women's organisations worldwide. The median annual income in 2010 in AWID's sample was USD 20,000.³⁷ AWID's research has consistently demonstrated that the overall financial sustainability of women's rights organisations is precarious. Women's rights organisations and networks remain reliant on short-term project support rather than long term flexible funding. In AWID's research sample, 48% of responding organisations had never received core funding, and 52% had never received multi-year funding.³⁸ Half-way through the 2011 fiscal year, only 13% of organisations that responded to the AWID survey had secured the funding they needed for the rest of the year.³⁹

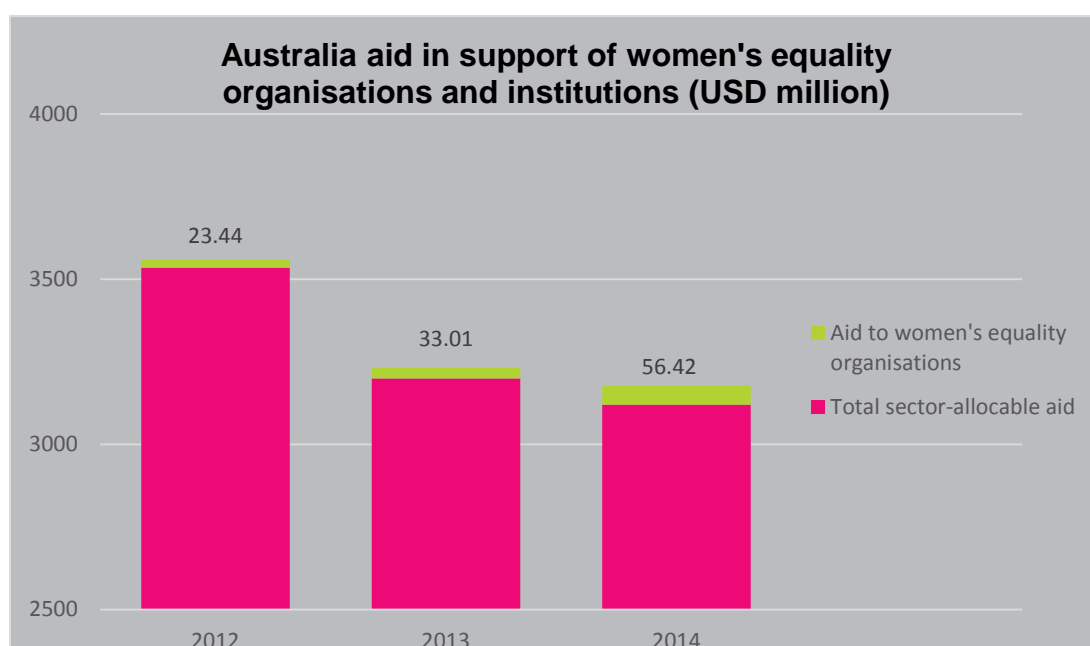
Women's rights organisations in the Pacific face particular challenges accessing funding. As at September 2015, AWID's Feminist Donor database, which identifies funders for women's rights organisations, reported that 80% of donors were located in North America and Europe and only 6% gave to countries in the Pacific.⁴⁰

Core funding for women's organisations is vital for sustaining the long-term movement building work that underpins progress towards gender equality. The emphasis should also be on providing long term, multi-year funding; empowering women and changing attitudes, beliefs, norms and practices that underpin gender inequality is a slow process.

Recommendation 10: IWDA recommends that the Australian Government increase funding support for women's rights organisations and networks, both within Australia and through the Australian aid program as a key strategy for preventing and responding to domestic violence.

Support for 'women's equality organisations and institutions' within the Australian aid budget

The OECD tracks aid in support of women's equality organisations and institutions through a 'purpose code' used in annual reporting on aid activities by Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members. This code helps to track donors' support to women's organisations and ministries. The graph below shows the amount of Australian aid allocated against this purpose code from 2012 to 2014.⁴¹ In 2013, the Australian aid activities under this purpose code amounted to just USD 33 million (1% of Australian sector-allocable aid).⁴² In 2014, this increased to USD 56.5 million. However, this still equated to only 1.8% of sector allocable aid.



Recommendation 11: Within the Australian Aid program, aid coded as supporting 'women's equality organisations and institutions' should be increased (currently less than 2% of sector allocable aid).

5. The need for sustainable and long term resourcing to support commitments on gender equality and violence against women alongside mechanisms which enable detailed tracking of this spend.

In May 2015, the DAC introduced a new code in its statistical system (code 15180) to track aid in support of ending violence against women and girls for the first time. This new tool will help to hold governments accountable for delivering on commitments in this area. It will apply from 2017, on 2016 aid flows. Currently, as part of their annual reporting to the OECD, DAC members are requested to indicate for each individual aid activity whether gender equality is one of its policy objectives. An activity can be classified as targeting gender equality as a *principal* objective, a *significant* objective or as not targeting gender equality as a policy objective.

Applying the Gender Equality Marker

Principal Objective: Gender equality is an explicit objective and is fundamental to the design and impact of the activity. The activity would not have been undertaken without this objective.

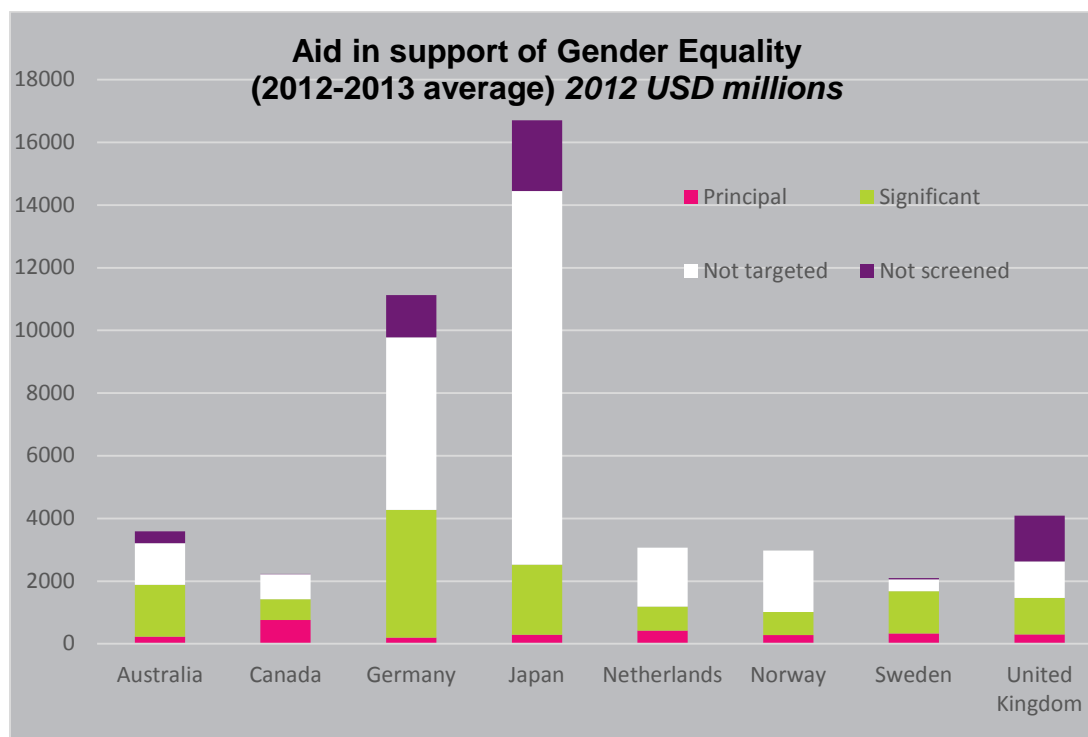
Significant Objective: Gender equality is an important but secondary objective of the activity. It is not the principal reason for undertaking the activity.

Not Targeted: An activity has been screened against the gender equality marker but was found not to target gender equality as one of its policy objectives.

Not Screened: Although coverage rates are improving not all aid is screened against the gender equality marker.

In 2014-15, the Australian Government committed AUD 2.44 billion to investments in programs where gender equality is a *principal or significant* objective (representing 54% of DFAT's aid investments by value across all sectors). However, investments with a specific (primary) focus on gender equality made up only 5% of this 54%.⁴³

How does this compare with other donors? Information from the OECD DAC for financial year 2012-13 shows that Australia identified USD 225 million as supporting gender equality as a *principal* objective and USD 1,658 million allocated to activities supporting gender equality as a *significant* objective. In comparison to other donors, Australia has a high proportion of aid focussed on gender equality as a significant objective but does not compare as well on activities supporting gender equality as a principal objective. Australia also has quite a high proportion of activities that have not been screened against the gender marker. This may artificially inflate the percentage of gender-equality focussed aid, which is calculated as a percentage of screened aid.



Importantly, for investments where gender equality is a *significant* objective, it is currently impossible to know how much is actually *spent* on specific action to promote gender equality and address barriers to women’s economic empowerment. What the reported figures tell us is that projects worth USD 1,658 million in total had gender equality as an important but secondary objective. It does not provide any information about what was spent on specific activities to integrate gender equality. Categorising an initiative as having gender equality as a ‘significant objective’ in itself indicates that gender equality is not a principal focus of the activity, so using total activity value as an indication of expenditure towards gender equality in such circumstances is misleading at best. Improving the ability to track and report how much is spent, where, to promote gender equality is crucial to assessing the effectiveness of expenditure.

Recommendation 12: IWDA recommends that the Australian Government increase its expenditure on aid investments which target gender equality as a primary objective and improve the ability to track and report how much is spent on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Recommendation 13: The OECD DAC marker system used to track overall DFAT expenditure through the aid program on gender equality and women’s empowerment could be adapted to track spend domestically.

6. Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: A formal Women’s Budget Statement (WBS) be reinstated and maintained as part of Australian Government accountability for its commitments to gender equality. Civil society, particularly women’s rights organisations, should be formally engaged in the WBS process.

Recommendation 2: Effective, coherent action to address the underlying causes of domestic violence and meet Australia’s commitments under the Global Goals requires an integrated and coordinated approach across all levels of Government, including Australia’s work in this area through the Australian Aid Program.

Recommendation 3: This Inquiry should consider and seek to build on the recent recommendations in relation to violence against women made by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and

Trade in its inquiry into Human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean – Asia Pacific region.

Recommendation 4: Government and civil society work to maximise opportunities for coordination and collaboration to inform Australia's work on violence against women both domestically and internationally including DFAT work in supporting evidence-based responses to VAWG across the Asia Pacific region.

Recommendation 5: An international component should be incorporated into all subsequent action plans under Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children in order to:

- a) Reflect existing international action by Australia on violence against women and bringing existing state, national and international initiatives together in one place.
- b) Provide a framework to coordinate action across Government on violence against women and facilitate shared learning
- c) Enable shared learning, maximisation of resources and partnership working to meet Australia's commitments on violence against women and girls at national and international levels.
- d) Provide a structure for the expertise of NGOs, including women's organisations and networks working in Asia and the Pacific, to inform Australian Government policy on VAWG.

Recommendation 6: Domestic violence must be recognised as both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality. Action to address violence against women both at home and abroad requires empowering women to claim their human rights in all spheres of their lives.

Recommendation 7: Investment should be made in interventions that aim to transform institutional practices and broader social norms that reinforce and condone violence against women as these have proven more effective at reducing violence.

Recommendation 8: Violence against women must be understood as both a fundamental barrier to change for women and girls and as a potential consequence of women's empowerment. For example, economic empowerment programming must acknowledge the impact of violence against women on women's economic security and integrate efforts to prevent violence against women.

Recommendation 9: The Australian Government should support the further development of the evidence base on violence against women with disabilities, and promote an inclusive approach to the collection of violence prevalence data.

Recommendation 10: The Australian Government should increase funding support for women's rights organisations and networks, both within Australia and through the Australian aid program as a key strategy for preventing and responding to domestic violence.

Recommendation 11: Within the Australian Aid program, aid coded as supporting 'women's equality organisations and institutions' should be increased (currently less than 2% of sector allocable aid).

Recommendation 12: The Australian Government should increase its expenditure on aid investments which target gender equality as a primary objective and improve the ability to track and report how much is spent on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Recommendation 13: The OECD DAC marker system used to track overall DFAT expenditure through the aid program on gender equality and women's empowerment could be adapted to track spend domestically.

NOTES

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Annexure A: Recommendations in relation to violence against women made by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, December 2015

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government take every opportunity:

- to engage with governments in the Indo–Pacific region, including at regional fora, to highlight the extent of violence against women and girls, the persistence of the problem, and its consequences; and
- to press other governments to enact and enforce laws that protect the human rights of women and girls, in particular in relation to sexual and gender-based violence, especially under-age and forced marriage and marital rape.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that, in light of the evidence showing continuing and pervasive violence against women and girls across the Indo–Pacific region, the Australian Government:

- facilitate targeted and co-ordinated research (including gathering national prevalence and incidence data, as well as quantitative and qualitative surveys of community attitudes), legal reform, and programs directly aimed at community attitudes that are tolerant of violence against women and girls; and
- consider increasing funding for activities to combat violence as a proportion of Australia's development assistance budget, as well as commit to the provision of resources for the long term.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- continue to support existing programs that partner with governments, non-government and community organisations, and faith-based organisations which:
 1. (i) deliver education with a particular focus on boys and adolescents, to promote understanding of consent, healthy sexuality, and respectful relationships; and
 2. (ii) make use of technology to expand the reach and engage young people.
- explore ways to extend programs addressing violence, such as those being run by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, and linking to similar initiatives operating in Australia and other countries across the region; and
- review work being undertaken in Australia and overseas to address gender-based violence to identify programs of best practice that are culturally appropriate for countries in the Indo–Pacific region.

Annexure B: Excerpts from the UK Government’s Call to End Violence against Women and Girls: Action Plan (versions 2011, 2013, 2014)

2. International

Women and girls in all countries suffer violence because of their gender. It is a global issue which requires all countries to work together to take a committed, coherent and co-ordinated stand against it. It is in the moral and economic interest for all nations to ensure that women and girls do not lead restricted lives and suffer violence.

Violence and lack of security hinders progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and curtails women and girls’ human rights. It prevents women and girls from benefiting fully from health, education and other services; increases the risk of maternal death, and vulnerability to HIV; and makes women more vulnerable to exploitation. We believe these issues need to be addressed and the United Kingdom will contribute by working in partnership with countries internationally and through its work with the European Union.

Action	Dept	Timing
<p>60. Continue to strongly support the ratification and lobby for the full implementation of the Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol.</p> <p>CEDAW and other human rights treaties lay the foundation for international efforts to improve women’s rights within a framework of rule of law and respect for human rights. We will continue to act as a strong voice in negotiations on international agreements on women’s rights.</p>	FCO	Ongoing
<p>60a. Continue to promote the domestic implementation of CEDAW.</p> <p>The 7th UK Periodic Report on CEDAW is due in May 2011. The GEO is engaging with NGOs, other government departments, the Devolved Administrations and overseas territories to gain their views. The GEO works to ensure that all departmental Ministers are alerted to those recommendations that are relevant to the work of their respective departments.</p>	GEO	Submit UK report to the UN Committee May 2011

<p>61. Take action to tackle VAWG in conflict and post conflict countries through the implementation of the UK National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, in partnership with the Department for International Development (DfID) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD).</p> <p>This resolution recognises that levels of VAWG in modern conflicts amounts to a threat to international peace and security and that women’s contribution to preventing and resolving conflict is under-recognised and unfulfilled. The NAP contains a number of specific commitments to implement SCR 1325, including tackling VAWG in conflict and post-conflict countries. This includes improving staff expertise and knowledge; targeted country plans for Afghanistan, DRC and Nepal; and working multilaterally with other countries. We want to monitor progress on the implementation of this NAP, in consultation with civil society so that our work is fully informed and scrutinized.</p>	<p>FCO</p>	<p>Establish civil society focus groups – January 2011</p> <p>Tri-departmental internal review of NAP – August 2011</p> <p>Report to Parliament – October 2011</p> <p>Senior Government consideration – December 2011</p> <p>Revised Plan disseminated – January 2012</p>
<p>62. Address VAWG through the Government’s forthcoming Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS).</p> <p>The BSOS should recognise that women’s inclusion in political settlements and peace processes, the protection of women and girls in situations of armed violence, and women’s access to security and justice, are essential building blocks for more peaceful and stable states and societies. The BSOS focus on upstream conflict prevention should also help reduce incidence and intensity of conflict, a key driver of VAWG.</p>	<p>DFID</p>	<p>New BSOS to be published by May 2011</p>
<p>63. Ensure that the UK’s humanitarian action, including both assistance and protection, prevents and responds to VAWG.</p> <p>Humanitarian crises often erode protection systems, social structures and infrastructure. Social norms and support networks break down due to conflict and/or natural disaster, resulting in an increase of women and children’s vulnerability to violence. An independent review of the UK’s Humanitarian Emergency Response is ongoing. Following the review, we will determine actions on UK support to tackling VAWG in humanitarian settings.</p>	<p>DFID</p>	<p>The Humanitarian Emergency Response Review concludes March 2011</p>

<p>64. Work with UN Women to ensure it focuses on key priorities including VAWG and the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals and delivers real progress for women and girls worldwide.</p> <p>As a member of the UN Women's Executive Board, we will work with international partners to ensure that a well focused strategic plan for the new UN agency for gender equality and women's rights is agreed and adopted at the September session of the Executive Board.</p>	<p>DFID / FCO</p>	<p>UN Women Strategic Plan to be adopted by Executive Board in September 2011</p>
<p>65. Continue to support the role and contribution of the Council of Europe (CoE) in preventing and responding to VAWG.</p> <p>We will continue to participate in the negotiations of the draft Convention on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. As well as sharing our best practice, we are also learning from the experiences of other European states in their efforts to address violence.</p>	<p>HO</p>	<p>Convention finalised summer 2011</p>
<p>66. Continue to support the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015.</p> <p>The EU Plan of Action specifically targets the strengthening of EU support to partner countries in combating gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination against women and girls. This includes: training EU delegation staff on how to implement the EU guidelines on VAWG and discrimination; increasing EU support for national strategies for combating VAWG; and systematically involving women's rights networks and organisations in local calls for proposals for human rights projects. The UK will continue to monitor progress against the EU Plan of Action.</p>	<p>DFID / FCO</p>	<p>Attend the annual Expert Group consultations March 2011</p>
<p>67. Scale up our activity to tackle VAWG in at least 15 of the poorest countries (includes countries in the UK 1325 National Action Plan).</p> <p>The following countries are planning to develop new DFID programmes on VAWG: India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Malawi, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia, Ghana, Kenya, Somalia, DRC, the occupied Palestinian Territories and Yemen. In addition, the UK continues to tackle VAWG in Afghanistan through the UK NAP. Projects are likely to include a range of interventions from strengthening security and justice systems, to changing attitudes and behaviours to supporting legislative programmes overseas.</p>	<p>DFID / FCO</p>	<p>Improved methods of measuring impact of DFID programmes on VAWG in place by March 2012</p> <p>Following the ongoing business planning process, countries will undertake project design. We will select a small group of these countries for focussed support, monitoring and reporting</p>

<p>68. Enhance the UK's international leadership on tackling VAWG overseas.</p> <p>Lynne Featherstone, the Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Equalities and Criminal Information was confirmed as Ministerial Champion for tackling VAWG overseas on 25th November 2010. The focus of the role is to provide policy coherence and co-ordination across Whitehall departments on tackling VAWG and to represent the UK overseas. The ministerial champion will also actively encourage FCO, DFID and MoD and other relevant Ministers (who retain Ministerial responsibility for VAWG) to use their influence in their domestic, EU and international engagements to drive forward efforts on VAWG.</p>	<p>HO</p>	<p>March 2011 introductory programme and work to define the role</p> <p>April 2011 – March 2012 programme of engagement in place including visits at international and EU level</p>
<p>69. Enable our staff to develop their expertise to support and develop our work on tackling VAWG and to transfer their knowledge across country programmes and sectors.</p> <p>Through training and support, we must equip staff to take forward the Government's international commitments on tackling VAWG. This will include developing staff knowledge and guidance on the causes and effects of VAWG and what effective interventions looks like and supporting them to access existing resources.</p>	<p>DFID</p>	<p>HMG Security and Justice Course to include specific focus on addressing VAWG by March 2011</p> <p>DFID guidance on integrating VAWG into programmes by March 2012</p>
<p>70. Work with partners to improve and communicate the evidence base on VAWG and understanding of effective interventions.</p> <p>We recognise that there are significant knowledge gaps on the extent and nature of VAWG and of effective interventions to address violence, including those which work across different contexts. The UK is looking to scale up our support to tackle VAWG in the poorest countries. Research is critical in enabling the UK and other development partners to design and implement effective policies and interventions. We will continue to work with our partners, including the World Bank, United Nations and Civil Society Partners to share lessons and best practice.</p>	<p>DFID</p>	<p>DFID commissioned evidence paper - July 2011</p> <p>Constructive dialogue with the World Bank to support the 2012 World Development Report – ongoing</p>

<p>71. Improve the international, including EU response, to forced marriage.</p> <p>The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) provides advice and support to anyone in the UK. However, overseas British Embassies and High Commissions can only provide support to British nationals. We want to build links with partners/ governments overseas to encourage them to adopt a co-ordinated response to forced marriage, so that nationals of their countries are afforded similar assistance, both in their country of residence and overseas.</p>	<p>FMU (FCO / HO)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>72. Review results of EU Fundamental Rights Agency's survey on VAW across EU member states and consider any recommendations.</p> <p>In 2011/12, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights will conduct the first dedicated EU wide survey on VAW.</p>	<p>All depts</p>	<p>First results from the survey will be ready from April 2012</p>

61	Raise awareness in the Department of Health to ensure staff have an understanding of violence against women and girls, and where to seek help and support. Engage with other Government Departments to encourage similar activity for staff across the Civil Service.	DH	49	Ongoing to 2015.
Improve the life chances of violence against women and girls victims overseas				
62	Work with Governments overseas to encourage legislative and policy reform to address the structural causes of violence against women and girls, in accordance with international commitments.	FCO	50	Ongoing to April 2015.
63	Continue to strongly support the ratification and lobby for the full implementation of the Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol.	FCO	51	Ongoing to April 2015.
64	Continue to promote the domestic implementation of CEDAW.	GEO	52	Ongoing to April 2015.
65	Take action to tackle violence against women and girls in conflict and post conflict countries through the implementation of the UK National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security, in partnership with DFID and the MoD.	FCO / MoD / DFID	53	Ongoing to April 2015.

66	Ensure that the UK's humanitarian action, including both assistance and protection, prevents and responds to violence against women and girls.	MoD / DFID	54	Ongoing to April 2015. Programme to protect girls in humanitarian settings is being developed with Girl Hub.
67	Work with UN Women to ensure it focuses on key priorities including violence against women and girls and the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals and delivers real progress for women and girls worldwide.	DFID / FCO	55	Ongoing to April 2015.
68	Continue to support the role of the Council of Europe (CoE) in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls.	HO / MOJ / GEO /	56	Ongoing to April 2015. HO is currently engaging with Devolved Administrations and OGDs to move towards ratification of the convention of preventing and eradicating violence against women and domestic violence.
69	Provide practical guidance to DFID country offices to tackle violence against women and girls in at least 15 of the poorest countries (includes countries in the UK 1325 National Action Plan).	DFID / FCO	57	Ongoing to April 2015.
70	Work with partners to improve and communicate the evidence base on violence against women and girls and understanding of effective interventions.	DFID	58	Ongoing to April 2015.
71	Improve the international, including EU, response to forced marriage by continuing to lobby for commitment to tackling the practice at key events.	FMU (FCO / HO)	59	Ongoing to April 2015.

72	Review results of EU Fundamental Rights Agency's survey on violence against women and girls across EU member states and consider any recommendations.	All Depts.	60	Initial findings due June 2013. Full report end 2013.
73	Through the Foreign Secretary's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, address the culture of impunity for sexual violence committed in conflict by: increasing the number of perpetrators brought to justice both internationally and nationally; strengthening international efforts and co-ordination; and supporting states to build their national capacity.	FCO	NEW	Ongoing to April 2015.
74	Invest up to £35 million over five years to support work to end FGM in at least fifteen countries.	DFID	NEW	Ongoing.

The life chances of violence against women and girls victims overseas are improved.				
Ref.	Action	Lead Dept.	2013 ref.	Timing
91	Work with Governments overseas to encourage legislative and policy reform to address the structural causes of violence against women and girls, in accordance with international commitments.	FCO	62	Ongoing to April 2015
92	Continue to strongly support the ratification and lobby for the full implementation of the Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol.	FCO	63	Ongoing to April 2015
93	Continue to promote the domestic implementation of CEDAW.	GEO	64	Ongoing to April 2015
94	Take action to tackle violence against women and girls in conflict and post conflict countries through the implementation of the UK National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security, in partnership with DFID and the MoD.	FCO MoD DFID	65	Ongoing to April 2015
95	Ensure that the UK's humanitarian action, including both assistance and protection, prevents and responds to violence against women and girls.	FCO MoD DFID	66	Ongoing to April 2015
96	Work with UN Women to ensure it focuses on key priorities including violence against women and girls and the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals and delivers real progress for women and girls worldwide.	DFID FCO	67	Ongoing to April 2015
97	Continue to support the role of the Council of Europe (CoE) in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls.	HO MoJ GEO	68	Ongoing to April 2015
98	Provide practical guidance to DFID country offices to tackle violence against women and girls in at least 15 of the poorest countries (includes countries in the UK 1325 National Action Plan).	DFID FCO	69	Ongoing to April 2015
99	Work with partners to improve and communicate the evidence base on violence against women and girls and understanding of effective interventions.	DFID	70	Ongoing to April 2015
100	Improve the international, including EU, response to forced marriage by continuing to lobby for commitment to tackling the practice at key events.	FMU (HO / FCO)	71	Ongoing to April 2015

101	Through the Foreign Secretary's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, address the culture of impunity for sexual violence committed in conflict by strengthening international efforts and co-ordination; and supporting states to build their national capacity.	FCO	73	Ongoing to April 2015
102	Invest up to £35 million over five years to support work to end FGM in at least fifteen countries.	DFID	74	Ongoing
103	Support the UN Special Rapporteur on the causes and consequences of violence against women and girls during their visit to the UK.	DFID HO	NEW	Spring 2014
104	Continue to work towards the ratification of the Istanbul Convention.	HO MoJ	NEW	Ongoing to April 2015
105	Publish the UK National Action Plan on women peace and security for 2014 to 2017.	FCO DFID MOD	NEW	June 2014
106	Use the June 2014 Summit on the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative to deliver practical global commitments and support national Governments in countries affected by conflict related sexual violence to tackle the problem head on and to promote domestic action.	FCO HO	NEW	June 2014
107	Continue to work towards a stand-alone goal on gender equality and a target on ending violence against women and girls in the framework that will replace the Millennium Development Goals after 2015.	DFID	NEW	By April 2015
108	Roll out the four components of the £25m Violence against Women and Girls Research and Innovation Fund to better understand what works in preventing and responding to VAWG globally.	DFID	NEW	By April 2015