

Beijing+30 Action 3: Zero Violence



ZERO VIOLENCE

Adopt, implement and fund legislation to end violence against women and girls, and develop comprehensive National Action Plans, including support and coordination with community-led organizations to extend the reach of services.

I. Introduction

Globally, violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains a critical issue, with nearly one in three women experiencing physical or sexual violence in their lifetime—a figure that does not include sexual harassment.¹ Despite significant progress in strengthening legal protections and policy commitments, challenges remain in ensuring effective implementation, comprehensive prevention strategies, and accessible services for all survivors. Harmful social norms, weak enforcement, and crises such as conflict and economic instability continue to heighten risks for women and girls. At the same time, backlash against gender equality underscores the urgent need for stronger legal action and sustained investment in solutions that provide safety, justice and support for all women and girls, no matter where they live.

II. Actions:

A comprehensive and sustained approach is required to end VAWG. Governments must **adopt, implement and fund comprehensive legislation** that addresses discrimination against women and girls, as well as VAWG, ensures survivor

protection and remedies, and the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators, and promotes prevention.² Effective implementation of such legislation requires appropriate capacity-building and sensitization of public officials, especially law enforcement personnel, the judiciary, healthcare providers, social workers and teachers.

Furthermore, laws must be backed by **well-resourced, evidence-based National Action Plans (NAPs)**.³ Such NAPs should have a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach to end VAWG, providing a strong and coherent framework for cooperative effort between government and civil society stakeholders while encouraging an indivisible, holistic and multisectoral response, including complementary approaches to preventing and eliminating violence, such as education, health, development and criminal justice efforts. Prevention strategies should focus on addressing harmful social norms, stereotypes and behaviours at institutional and community levels. They should also include robust accountability mechanisms and investments in civil society, women's rights organizations and movements to drive community-based action. Ensuring the meaningful participation of civil society and women's rights organizations at all stages of the process of developing, implementing and monitoring the NAP is critical.

1. UN Women, "Facts and figures: Ending violence against women", 25 November 2024, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>.
2. UN Women, Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women (New York, UN Women, 2012), <https://knowledge.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/12/handbook-for-legislation-on-violence-against-women>; UN Women, Supplement to the Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women: "Harmful Practices" against Women (New York, UN Women, 2012), <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2012/12/UNW-Legislation-Supplement-EN.pdf.pdf>.
3. UN Women, Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women (New York, UN Women, 2012), <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/7/handbook-for-national-action-plans-on-violence-against-women>; The Equality Institute and UN Women, Together for Prevention: Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls (Melbourne, Australia, The Equality Institute, and New York, UN Women, 2023), <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/handbook-on-multisectoral-national-action-plans-to-prevent-violence-against-women-and-girls-en.pdf>.

III. Normative Roots

Global frameworks call on States to enact, enforce and monitor comprehensive legal measures and develop NAPs to end VAWG. These include the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,⁴ United Nations General Assembly Resolutions⁵ and the CEDAW Committee's General Recommendations 19⁶ and 35.⁷ Additionally, regional frameworks reinforce the need for legislative and policy action, such as the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of VAW ('Convention of Belém do Pará'),⁸ the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa,⁹ the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence ('Istanbul Convention')¹⁰ and the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of VAW.¹¹

IV. Impact at scale

As of 2023, 104 countries had comprehensive domestic violence laws,¹² and 78 per cent of countries provided budgetary commitments for VAWG services¹³—highlighting the essential role of sustained investment in prevention, survivor support and enforcement. The 30-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action found that 79 per cent of States had introduced, updated or expanded NAPs in 2024, up from 68 per cent in 2019. Research confirms that comprehensive legal protections and well-funded NAPs significantly reduce VAWG:

- Countries with **laws on domestic violence** report significantly lower rates of intimate partner violence (9.5 per cent) than those without such legislation (16.1 per cent).¹⁴
- The rates of intimate partner violence are 2.5 times lower in countries with **comprehensive VAWG measures** than those with weak protections.¹⁵
- The existence of **strong and autonomous feminist movements** is the single most critical factor in driving progress to end VAWG.¹⁶



Photo: UN Women/Nguyen Duc Hieu

4. United Nations, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (New York, United Nations, 1995), https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_CONF.177_20.pdf. On VAWG legislation, see para. 124(j) and strategic objectives D1, D2, and D3. On VAWG NAPS, see para 124(j) and strategic objectives D1, D2, and D3.
5. United Nations General Assembly, Resolutions on Violence against Women, https://digitallibrary.un.org/search?ln=en&p=subjectheading%3A%5BGENDER-BASED%20VIOLENCE%5D&f=&rm=&sf=&so=d&rg=50&c=United%20Nations%20Digital%20Library%20System&of=hb&fti=0&fct_1=Resolutions%20and%20Decisions&fct_2=General%20Assembly&fti=0.
6. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General recommendation No. 19 on violence against women (New York, United Nations, 1992), https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/DownloadDraft.aspx?key=EzzHLN-2q5WA39P7xShbyVPVtIgHEfi/ryBDAqYibkTbsdP62Yubbf44x08nefJ.
7. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19 (1992) (New York, United Nations, 2017), <https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/GC/35>.
8. Organization of American States, Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Washington, D.C., Organization of American States, 1994), Articles 7 and 8, <https://www.oas.org/en/CIM/docs/Belem-do-Para%5bEN%5d.pdf>.
9. African Union, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Abidjan, African Union, 2003), Article 4, <https://au.int/en/treaties/protocol-african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights-rights-women-africa>.
10. Council of Europe, Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Brussels, Council of Europe, 2011), Chapter III, Article 12, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/council-of-europe-convention-on-preventing-and-combating-violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence>.
11. Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN Region (Jakarta, ASEAN, 2012), <https://asean.org/declaration-on-the-elimination-of-violence-against-women-in-the-asean-region/>.
12. World Bank Group, Women, Business and the Law 2024 (Washington, D.C., World Bank Group, 2024), p. 25.
13. UN Women, "Behind the numbers: good practices in promoting gender equality through legal frameworks", 18 July 2023, <https://data.unwomen.org/resources/behind-numbers-good-practices-promoting-gender-equality-through-legal-frameworks>. This percentage is based on data validated and submitted by 120 countries as part of the review of the SDG5.1.1 indicator.

V. Proof of concept

Several countries demonstrate how strong laws, well-implemented NAPs and multisectoral collaboration can lead to real change:

Australia: Australia's National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children demonstrates the impact of a multisectoral approach that integrates law enforcement, social services and community organizations. The plan has led to significant improvements in public awareness, prevention initiatives, and access to essential support services for survivors. A key factor in its success has been its strong focus on prevention and public education, which has enhanced community engagement and strengthened coordinated responses across sectors.¹⁷

Rwanda: Rwanda's NAP for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) includes a dedicated pillar on the elimination of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in all its forms and levels and places a strong emphasis on community involvement and legal reforms, ensuring a holistic and survivor-centred response. One of its most impactful initiatives has been the establishment of One-Stop Centres, which provide comprehensive support services—including legal aid, medical care, counselling and emergency shelter—all under one roof. Rwanda's approach demonstrates how a well-designed and adequately funded NAP can improve coordination, increase financial investment, enhance prevention and response services, and strengthen accountability at all levels.

Nicaragua: Coordinated multisectoral action by governments and civil society, including in the passing of a comprehensive VAWG law and policy changes, services and awareness-raising campaigns, contributed to large-scale reductions in VAWG.

Over three decades, the country noted a 70 per cent reduction in physical intimate partner violence. Research found that this result was closely linked to the efforts of Nicaraguan women's rights activists to improve women's access to justice and services, and increase knowledge of their rights. The case study demonstrated the importance of funding women's movements and human rights defenders so that they can continue to play this critical role.¹⁸

VI. Existing platforms/alliances to connect to and leverage

The global movement to end VAWG has created several key platforms and alliances that can be leveraged to expand impact, align efforts and scale solutions:

- The **United Nations Secretary-General's UNiTE to End VAW Campaign** is a multi-year advocacy effort aimed at preventing and eliminating VAWG around the world.¹⁹ UNiTE calls on governments, development actors, civil society, women's rights organizations, young people, the private sector, the media and the entire United Nations system to collaborate in addressing VAWG. One of the campaign's five key outcomes is the adoption and implementation of national laws and multisectoral NAPs to address VAWG.
- The **Generation Equality Action Coalitions** are the world's road map for gender equality and acceleration of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the full realization of the Beijing Platform for Action.²⁰ The **Generation Equality GBV Action Coalition** offers a multi-stakeholder platform aiming at taking concerted action and delivering transformative change for women and girls worldwide through concrete actions, including through laws and NAPs.²¹

14. UN Women, Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2024 (New York, UN Women, 2024), <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2024-en.pdf>.
15. UN Women, Global Database on Violence against Women: State Measures Report (forthcoming).
16. S.L. Weldon and M. Htun, "Feminist mobilisation and progressive policy change: why governments take action to combat violence against women", *Gender & Development*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2013), pp. 231–247, <https://malahtun.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/weldon-and-htun-2013-gen-and-dev.pdf>.
17. KPMG, "Evaluation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children (2010-2022)", presented for the Department of Social Services, Canberra, 2022, <https://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/national-plan-evaluation-final-updated-accessibility-14102022.pdf>.
18. N. Ellsberg, M. Quintanilla and W.J. Ugarte, "Pathways to change: Three decades of feminist research and activism to end violence against women in Nicaragua", *Global Public Health*, vol. 17, no. 11 (2022), pp. 3142–3159, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17441692.2022.2038652>.
19. UN Women, "UNiTE to End Violence against Women Campaign", <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/unite>.

- The **Group of Friends for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls** was established in December 2020 to promote implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General's Call on Gender-based Violence and COVID-19 and to support relevant global initiatives aimed at eliminating GBV, such as Spotlight. One of the five priorities of the Group of Friends is to scale up the implementation of evidence-informed strategies and programmes across multiple sectors to prevent and eliminate all forms of VAWG.
- The **EU-UN Women ACT to End Violence against Women and Girls** is a game-changing commitment between the European Commission and UN Women as co-leaders of the Action Coalition on GBV, in partnership with the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, that aims to amplify women's rights movements as they coordinate their push for justice.

VII. Impact: What can we achieve by 2030?

By 2030, with strong laws, fully implemented NAPs and sustained funding, we can expect transformational progress to achieve SDG5 targets:

- Stronger legal protections and more effective enforcement mechanisms
- Improved coordinated multisectoral survivor support services, including education, health, legal and psychosocial support

THE BEIJING+30 ACTION AGENDA

This Action is part of the [Beijing+30 Action Agenda](#): a voluntary, action-oriented platform to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda. Grounded in stronger financing for gender equality and better gender data, and centering adolescent girls and young women, the Action Agenda invites Member States to identify one or two national priority actions and announce these at the High-Level Meeting on Beijing+30 on 22 September 2025.

20. Generation Equality, Gender-Based Violence Action Coalition (Generation Equality, 2020), https://commitments.generationequality.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/gender-based_violence.pdf.
21. Ibid. Action: “More States and regional actors ratify international and regional conventions and public and private sector institutions, strengthen, implement and finance evidence-based driven laws, policies and action plans to end gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity” with a target of “550 million more women and girls live in countries with laws and policies prohibiting all forms of GBV”.
22. UN Women, “ACT to End Violence against Women”, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/act>.



Photo: UN Women/Johis Alarcón