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International Development
Committee

**Violence Against
Women and Girls**

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Volume II

Additional written evidence

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The International Development Committee

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Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Dr David Harrison (Clerk), Chloe Challender (Senior Adviser), Judy Goodall (Inquiry Manager), Louise Whitley (Inquiry Manager), Rob Page (Committee Specialist), Anita Fuki (Senior Committee Assistant), Annabel Goddard (Committee Assistant), Paul Hampson (Committee Support Assistant) and Hannah Pearce (Media Officer).

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Written evidence

Written evidence submitted by Amnesty International UK

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Department for International Development (DFID) has made significant and welcome progress in addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), including DFID's Theory of Change for Tackling VAWG, the inclusion of VAWG as a pillar for action in DFID's 2011 Strategic Vision for Girls and Women and the new violence against women research and innovation fund. However, Amnesty International UK recommends more work is carried out to integrate DFID's current best practice on VAWG throughout all of DFID's work.

2. We welcome that VAWG is a UK government priority for their Presidency of the G8 in 2013. However, we recommend a more coordinated and coherent cross-government approach to addressing VAWG alongside the key departments such as the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). This would help better deliver on cross government work such as the UK National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (NAP), and the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI).

3. Amnesty International UK recommends that DFID should:

- I. ensure best practice on addressing VAWG is mainstreamed and prioritised in country programmes;
- II. undertake a qualitative and quantitative assessment of both the implementation and impact of the Theory of Change for Tackling VAWG guidelines;
- III. prioritise VAWG in conflict and post-conflict countries, including an explicit priority goal on tackling VAWG in the next Operational Plan on Afghanistan;
- IV. evaluate and increase funding and technical support to Women's Rights Organisations (WRO) and Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) across all areas of their work, including inviting consultation and active participation on the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP);
- V. assess and improve the accessibility of DFID funding streams to smaller WROs and projects run by WHRDs working on VAWG.

4. We recommend that DFID uses the 20th review of the International Conference on Population and Development programme of action (ICPD+20) to strongly advocate for the inclusion of progressive language and a comprehensive and integrated approach for sexual and reproductive rights for all.

5. We strongly support the International Development Committees' (the Committee) recommendation that women's rights should be explicitly set out in quantitative detail in the post-2015 framework. In addition, we would strongly recommend the inclusion of a rights based target on violence against women in the post-2015 development goals.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK

6. Amnesty International UK is a national section of a global movement of over three million supporters, members and activists. We represent more than 230,000 supporters in the United Kingdom. Collectively, our vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. Our mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of these rights. We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion.

INTRODUCTION

7. Amnesty International UK welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the work of the Committee in its assessment of the UK's efforts to combat VAWG.

8. Violence Against Women and Girls is one of the most pervasive abuses of fundamental human rights. Every day thousands of women and girls are abused and murdered (often by family members), raped in armed conflicts and attacked for defending women's rights. It affects women and girls globally, and in all walks of life, and is committed in order to exert power and control, to undermine equality, and to ensure women's subordination. It remains a scandal that in many contexts violence against women and girls continues to be tolerated, justified and overlooked.

9. Violence against women has been identified as a grave human rights violation because of the way that it violates many other rights simultaneously, seriously impairing the ability of women and girls to enjoy their full range of human rights including the right to health, the right to education, the right to physical and mental integrity, the right to determine the number and spacing of their children, and the right to life and to freedom from torture.

10. States have obligations to take appropriate measures to prevent, prosecute all forms of, and protect women and girls from violence. In order to effectively address violence against women, a comprehensive approach is required, which also tackles the root causes, such as gender inequality.

The extent to which DFID programmes on VAWG support the right policy instruments and reflect best practice, as outlined in DFID's Theory of Change and related guidance

11. We welcome the high priority DFID has placed on preventing violence against women and girls overseas¹ and DFID's Theory of Change for Tackling VAWG, in particular the focus on securing the rights of women as the most effective way of tackling gender inequality and subsequently VAWG.

12. The Theory of Change guidelines reflect best practice and are a helpful framework from which to understand how tackling impunity and increasing women and girls' access to justice contribute to creating longer-term change for women and girls. **We recommend DFID undertake a qualitative and quantitative assessment of both the implementation and impact of the Theory of Change for Tackling VAWG guidelines in all operational plans and programmes.**

13. We welcome the recognition in the Theory of Change guidelines that women's rights organisations and WHRDs create and sustain positive change in women and girls' lives. **We recommend that DFID focus on the protection needs of WHRDs and incorporate this into the Theory of Change guidelines.**

14. Amnesty International UK is concerned that the principles and best practice highlighted in DFID's Theory of Change have not yet been fully mainstreamed into key DFID country programmes. Sexual violence/VAWG is only a top priority in two out of twenty seven bilateral aid programmes². Where women are included as a top priority, the overarching trend is to improve maternal health and access to education. Whilst these are desirable objectives, there should be more recognition that high levels of VAWG can negatively affect the ability to reach these objectives, and indeed others. **We recommend that the best practice highlighted in DFID's Theory of Change for Tackling VAWG is prioritised and mainstreamed on the ground/in country throughout DFID's Country Programmes, particularly in conflict, post-conflict and crisis affected countries.**

15. We are concerned at the lack of specific objectives on VAWG in conflict, post-conflict or crisis countries. In DFID's Operational Plan for Afghanistan (a country in which 87% of women suffer violence³), for instance, tackling VAWG is not a strategic priority area and is only mentioned in relation to the UK National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325⁴. **We recommend that the next DFID Operational Plan on Afghanistan (post-2014) should include an explicit priority goal on tackling VAWG and DFID should seek to combat VAWG through support for women's shelters and legal services.**

The effectiveness of DFID funding mechanisms for VAWG and the systems in place to measure their impact

16. Women who defend human rights are active on a variety of issues, often highlighting violations that have long been neglected. Because they raise "sensitive" issues, such as sexual violence and sexual and reproductive health rights, and challenge the status quo of male-dominated structures, WHRDs around the world face threats, intimidation, abduction, sexual violence and even killings. Attacks against WHRDs are often gender-based, with women being targeted both because of their activism and because they are women.

17. At a recent conference organised by Peace Brigades International, the Associate Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace, and Security, GAPS-UK, Womankind Worldwide, and Amnesty International UK, concerns about lack of support, protection and accessibility to funding were raised by a number of small WROs and WHRDs from different countries.

18. We welcome DFID's Guidance on Monitoring and Evaluation for Programming on VAWG. However we believe it is necessary to better assess and improve accessibility of funding streams to smaller WROs and projects run by WHRDs working on VAWG.

19. **Amnesty International UK recommends that DFID funding priorities should emphasise the need to support advocacy for the promotion of women's rights. Specific funding or resource pools for WHRDs and their activities should include funding relief for WHRDs at risk—such as emergency support, legal defence fund, psycho-social counselling, and provisions for family care.**

20. **We further recommend that DFID examine and improve how accessible funding is to WHRDs, especially for those who face multiple barriers to accessing funds such as those who work in remote rural areas, do not speak English, may not have access to online funding mechanisms and work on the most marginalised issues.**

¹ Business Plan 2011–2015, DFID, May 2011: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/DFID-business-plan.pdf>; A new strategic vision for girls and women: stopping poverty before it starts, DFID, 2011: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/strategic-vision-girls-women.pdf>

² DFID Bilateral Aid Review results: country summaries, March 2011

³ Global Rights Report—March 2008 www.globalrights.org/

⁴ Operational Plan 2011–2015 DFID Afghanistan June 2012: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/afghanistan>

21. ***We recommend that DFID staff receive adequate training about the role and protection needs of human rights defenders, including the incorporation of gender-specific recommendations to ensure specific focus on issues related to WHRDs.***

Strength of UK leadership role internationally on VAWG, including the effectiveness of DFID's work with multilateral partners and the UK's International Champion for VAWG position

22. One of the most important fronts in the struggle for women's human rights is around sexual and reproductive autonomy, and the coercive and often violent ways in which that autonomy is suppressed. Much of the gender based violence inflicted on women is aimed at restricting and controlling their sexuality and reproductive capacity, whether in the form of so-called 'honour killings' of women who are believed to have had sex outside of marriage, or in the form of marital rape, or the targeting of pregnant women as a strategy of conflict.

23. These and other sexual and reproductive rights violations are happening worldwide on a massive scale and are clearly proscribed under international law. The international community affirmed sexual and reproductive rights as human rights in the Programme of Action adopted at the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Together with other UN instruments, they articulate what states must do to respect, protect and fulfil women's sexual and reproductive rights.

24. As governments embark on the next stages of negotiating the ICPD + 20 review, we urge them to take a strong lead in negotiations to maintain and strengthen both commitments and action in the area of sexual and reproductive rights. ***We urge the UK Government to build on the leadership shown on VAWG by advocating strongly for the inclusion of progressive language and a comprehensive and integrated approach for sexual and reproductive rights for all, essential components of any strategy to prevent, respond to and ultimately end gender based violence.***

25. We welcomed the creation of the UK's International Champion on Violence against Women as a positive step to ensure there is high-level leadership on tackling VAWG. Despite this positive step forward, we remain concerned that the role of International Champion is hampered by lack of overarching responsibility for VAWG policy across the UK government. ***We recommend that the International Champion post should have sufficient access, authority and resources to drive this strategy throughout the UK's government work on VAWG.***

Cross-governmental working within the UK, particularly co-operation between DFID, the FCO and the MOD on the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and the UK Government National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security

26. We welcome the leadership shown by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to address the impunity surrounding sexual violence in conflict, and the commitment to prioritising action to prevent conflict related sexual violence during the UK presidency of the G8. We particularly welcome the commitment to consult with NGOs, Civil Society Organisations, and experts in the framing of this important initiative.

27. ***DFID has a key role to play in ensuring that the commitments expressed through PSVI prevent and respond to gender-based violence. We recommend DFID ensures that cross-governmental PSVI work is a priority and adequately resourced in all its operational plans and strategies for countries affected by violent conflict.***

28. ***In particular, we recommend greater recognition and support (both funding and technical) for the role WROs and WHRDs in community development, delivering essential services, supporting survivors of gender based violence, advocating for change and holding their own governments to account would be welcome across all areas of DFID's work.***

29. UN Security Council resolution 1325 was adopted in recognition of the particular and disproportionate impact of conflict on women. It constituted an important recognition of women as active agents in peace and security, rather than victims of conflict. Together with subsequent resolutions, the Security Council sets out important commitments to address the impact of armed conflict on women. We welcome that progress has been made on the UK government's NAP in training, country programmes, operations and increased allocation of staff resources. However, assessing progress on the UK government's NAP is made difficult by a focus on activities rather than impact and outcome orientated changes. The lack of reporting against indicators and a lack of time frames makes it difficult to assess whether the NAP is on course for completion at the end of its three year period.

30. We welcome that DFID has scaled up programme work on 1325 as detailed in the NAP Annual Review. The current UK NAP runs from 2010 to 2013 and we will soon see its evaluation and development of a 2014–2016 NAP. ***We recommend the consultation process for the 2014–2016 NAP includes UK government led consultations with WROs and WHRDs in conflict-affected countries***

31. Whilst VAWG and work on Women Peace and Security (WPS) are two overlapping spheres of work; scaling up work on VAWG is not the same as setting up distinct projects on WPS. ***We recommend that all three departments working on the NAP take concrete measurable steps to ensure effective implementation***

of Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, as well as resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960. This entails genuinely recognising women as active agents of positive change, and to be included as active and full participants, on an equal basis with men, at all stages of conflict prevention, peace processes, and in transitional justice efforts.

32. We are concerned that, despite progress made and an increase of resources, institutional barriers remain that will hinder the implementation and effectiveness of the NAP. There is still a lack of a holistic and coherent approach and understanding of the importance of gender equality and women's human rights across key government departments tasked with delivering aspects of the NAP, notably between the MOD, FCO and DFID. There is no specific budget attached to the UK government's delivery of NAP. ***We recommend that to ensure the NAP is successfully implemented there should be clearly allocated funding along with cross-government co-ordination and leadership.***

33. It is vital that women's rights are central to the UK Government's conceptualisation of stability and security. ***We recommend that the UK Government should measure progress on women's participation by using indicators, including the number of women taking part in peace talks, the gender content of peace agreements and the extent to which post-conflict reparations, economic recovery programmes and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration processes benefit women.***

Key events in 2013: the 57th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March

34. It is crucial that this year CSW adopts strong agreed conclusions especially in view of the importance of this year's priority theme, being "Elimination of violence against women", and also in light of CSW's failure last year to adopt agreed conclusions; due to disagreement on crucial human rights issues, including the very notion of "gender".

35. ***We recommend that the UK government demonstrate a firm commitment to women's rights and in particular we recommend that they affirm the commitments to sexual and reproductive rights for all, including—as a minimum—by reaffirming the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action as well as all subsequent advances on the issue during ICPD and Beijing Review processes.***

36. ***We recommend that the UK government champion the role of WHRDs as legitimate and vital actors and press UN Member States and other relevant parts of the UN system to create an environment conducive for WHRDs to carry out their important work free from harassment, intimidation or attacks. At CSW all states must commit to protecting WHRDs from violations by offering effective security measures, and by promptly and impartially investigating violations against WHRDs with a view to bringing those responsible to justice.***

VAWG within the post-2015 development goals

37. The need to tackle the impact of VAWG was specifically recognised by the Millennium Declaration; yet by omitting to set targets or indicators on VAWG, the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) fail to address one of the most significant barriers to women's equality.

38. Moreover, we believe that VAWG has seriously undermined the fulfilment of all of the MDGs. Early and/or forced marriage, for example, is a major cause of disruption to girls' education⁵ and many girls are the victim of sexual violence in school, which affects the targets on education (MDG 2 and MDG3). In Uganda, for instance, Amnesty International found high levels of sexual violence and exploitation of girls in schools⁶. Pregnancy has a major impact on the numbers of girls who drop out of school and as abortion law in Uganda is unclear⁷, many women and girls are forced to carry pregnancies arising from rape to term. There are no provisions to accommodate young mothers in school, and many drop out, with grave consequences for their future. Conversely, education of girls is closely related to greater decision-making power over finances and reproductive health issues like condom use or seeking treatment for sexually-transmitted diseases in future life.

39. VAWG also negatively impacts on women's participation in political and civil life (MDG3). In Afghanistan, Amnesty International has documented the impact of violence on women in public life, where many high profile women have been killed. Najia Sediqi, Head of the Department of Women's Affairs in Laghman, was killed as she travelled to work in December 2012. Sediqi had held her post for only a few months following the murder of her predecessor, Hanifa Safi. Safi was killed in July 2012, when an improvised explosive device attached to her car was remotely detonated.

40. Amnesty International UK strongly supports the Committees' recommendation that women's rights should be explicitly set out in quantitative detail in the post-2015 framework⁸. ***In addition, we would strongly***

⁵ Amnesty International 'I can't afford justice: violence against women in Uganda continues unchecked and unpunished', 2010 http://www.amnesty.org.uk/uploads/documents/doc_20290.pdf

⁶ Amnesty International 'I can't afford justice: violence against women in Uganda continues unchecked and unpunished', page 28, 2010 http://www.amnesty.org.uk/uploads/documents/doc_20290.pdf

⁷ Centre for Reproductive Rights 'A technical guide to understanding the legal and policy framework on terminations of pregnancy in Uganda' 2012, http://reproductiverights.org/sites/crr.civicaactions.net/files/documents/crr_UgandaBriefingPaper_v5.pdf

⁸ International Development Committee, Post-2015 Development Goals: Potential Structure, Point 61 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmintdev/657/65708.htm#a15> (accessed on 22nd January 2013)

recommend the inclusion of a rights based target on violence against women in the post-2015 development goals. The UK Government currently plays a lead role in the development of the post-2015 framework through its co-Chairpersonship of the UN High Level Panel on the MDGs. We urge the UK Government to ensure that the issue of VAW is fully integrated into the debate.

February 2013

Further written evidence submitted by Amnesty International UK

RE: DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT'S STRATEGIC PRIORITY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN OPERATIONAL PLAN

1. On Monday 4 March 2013 the Secretary of State for International Development, Justine Greening, announced that violence against women would be a strategic priority in DFID's next Operational Plan for Afghanistan. Amnesty International UK (AIUK) has frequently called for this and warmly welcomes the announcement. This additional evidence to the International Development Committee's inquiry into violence against women incorporates AIUK's initial observations for implementation of the new strategic priority.⁹

2. Including violence against women and girls as a strategic priority in Afghanistan's Operational plan has the potential to ensure that DFID's commitment to tackle the issue is translated into programmatic and funding priorities. In addition to funding and a clear programme of work, it is vital that DFID bases the strategic priority on its Theory of Change for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, recognising the holistic approach needed to tackle abuse.

3. Following the announcement of the strategic priority, AIUK has informally consulted with Afghan women's organisations to inform our recommendations to the UK government. Following these discussions, AIUK's initial observations are:

- I. DFID should fully and meaningfully consult with Afghan women's organisations working to tackle violence against women in the development of the strategic priority.
- II. The strategic priority should include:
 - Sustainable and long-term funding for women's organisations, including those which run women's shelters.
 - Projects that focus on training the judiciary on the implementation of the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law.
 - Support for women's recruitment into the Afghan National Police, in particular Family Response Units (Family Response Units are meant to serve as dedicated teams, housed in a separate area of the police station with its own entrance, to provide women with specialized assistance.)
 - Projects that support and protect the rights of Afghan women human rights defenders and high profile women.

March 2013

Written evidence submitted by the Associate Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace and Security

The Associate Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace and Security (APG) welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the Select Committee's inquiry into UK efforts to combat violence against women and girls (VAWG). It comes as a timely moment, with the Department for International Development (DFID) paying increasing attention to tackling VAWG, DFID starting to develop the next phase of its country operational plans¹⁰ and key opportunities for the UK to influence the international agenda in the year ahead.

VAWG is widespread across all societies, communities and countries and in times of conflict and peace. It is a fundamental violation of human rights, can constitute genocide and crimes against humanity and, if perpetrated in the context of conflict, can amount to war crimes. States have undertaken to address this, through the promulgation of international human rights standards and at the United Nations and in regional fora.¹¹ International, regional and national instruments recognise states must take action to prevent and respond to VAWG, that VAWG is a development and human rights issue and that it is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. As such, ending VAWG is valuable in and of itself, will lift barriers to women and girls achieving other rights and entitlements and contribute to good governance and long-term and sustainable peace.

⁹ These initial observations are provided in response to the announcement, however AIUK will develop comprehensive recommendations in due course.

¹⁰ The current Operational Plans run from 2011–2015 and are available here: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/news/latest-news/2011/action-plans-set-out-future-of-uk-aid/>.

¹¹ This includes the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2000), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sexual Violence in Conflict and UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1894 and 1960.

The APG is pleased to see the UK increasing commitment to tackling VAWG overseas, demonstrated by new policy and financial commitments,¹² the appointment of a Ministerial Champion,¹³ expansion of DFID programming and capacity building of country offices and commitment to mobilise the international community through the UK's presidency of the G8 and at the Commission on the Status of Women in 2013.

While welcoming growing attention and resources, this submission will highlight a number of areas where action needs to be taken and make the following recommendations:

- A greater proportion of DFID's programming and funding for tackling VAWG should focus explicitly on tackling root causes and directly address women's empowerment.
- Effective systems should be put in place to track how much money is being spent on women's rights and who receives this funding, including through tracking all aid using the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gender equality marker.
- A review of funding mechanisms should take place to ensure accessibility and additional, dedicated funding provided to women's rights organisations working on VAWG, including through devolved funding via women's funds and ensuring at least 15 percent of all UK conflict and peacebuilding funds, in line with UN targets,¹⁴ are spent on addressing women's specific needs and advancing gender equality.
- Recognition of and protection for women human rights defenders as agents of change should be made a cross-cutting issue throughout all aspects of development work, including in all policies including business strategy, programming, monitoring and evaluation, DFID's priority pillars and through close coordination between DFID and UK embassies in country.
- Security of women human rights defenders should be recognised as a legitimate use of development money with questions related to risk in funding application forms and reporting processes including harassment and insecurity experienced during the project.
- A system to share lessons and training between DFID staff around preventing and responding to attacks and harassment of women human rights defenders encountered in development projects should be put in place.
- Implementation of the Building Stability Overseas Strategy should recognise VAWG as a core security issue and that women's unequal power in society is a driver of violence conflict, with this understanding being properly reflected in conflict analysis, training, response and guidance.
- A member of the National Security Council should have explicit responsibility for women, peace and security to ensure gender analysis is taken into account in all discussions on stability, peace building and state building.
- An assessment of the integration of women, peace and security analysis into UK security and justice sector programming in fragile and conflict affected states should be carried out as part of the 2013 evaluation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.
- DFID should convene a meeting of donors to discuss ways to fill funding gaps to ensure access to safe and confidential health services for survivors of VAWG which respond to psychological trauma and provide emergency reproductive health services.
- The Ministerial Champion on VAWG Overseas should have the access and resources to drive the agenda forward across Government, especially across the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, DFID and the Ministry of Defence, and report annually to parliament on progress.
- All DFID Operational Plans should be required to outline how to address VAWG as part of their wider programming. In fragile and conflict affected states and countries in transition all DFID operational plans should reference the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and outline how the UK will meet its women, peace and security commitments.
- The UK should show leadership at the Commission on the Status of Women to protect existing human rights commitments and supports the call by the UN Convened Expert Group for the development of an international implementation plan to end VAWG.
- The UK should promote the inclusion of a specific target on reducing VAWG under a standalone goal on gender in the post 2015 development framework.

HOLISTIC APPROACHES TO GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND LEADERSHIP

1. DFID's *Theory of Change for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls* explicitly states that VAWG is caused by gender inequality and that empowerment of women and girls is a prerequisite for effective prevention

¹² Policies include the UK's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, the Cross Government VAWG Strategy and Action Plan, commitment in DFID's Business Plan 2011–2015 to approve new VAWG programmes. DFID has also launched a VAWG Research and Innovation Fund.

¹³ Please see here for more details: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/news/latest-news/2010/lynne-featherstone-appointed-international-violence-against-women-champion/>.

¹⁴ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary General on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding,' A/65/354-S/2010/466, October 2010.

and response.¹⁵ However a relatively small proportion of programming addresses women's empowerment compared to building institutional capacity.¹⁶ While investment in formal security and justice sectors such as the police and judiciary are necessary, this will have limited impact without concomitant efforts to tackle the root causes of violence and gender discrimination and promoting women's empowerment and equality. Women and girls often are unable or unwilling to access formal institutions due to limited awareness of rights, stigma and lack of economic autonomy and as there are few women present in these highly masculinised structures.¹⁷ Increasing the quality and quantity of participation and leadership in political, economic and cultural decision-making and at community, national, regional and international levels is key to preventing VAWG.

The APG recommends that:

- A greater proportion of DFID's programming and funding for tackling VAWG should focus explicitly on tackling root causes and directly address women's empowerment.

SUPPORTING THE AGENTS OF CHANGE

2. Recent research looked at activism and policy development in over seventy countries and across four decades. It found mobilisation of feminist activists and women's rights organisation had increased and longer lasting impact than intra-legislative political factors, such as political parties or the number of women politicians, or economic factors such as national wealth.¹⁸ Despite their catalytic roles in preventing and responding to VAWG, the contributions of women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and women's rights organisations continue to be overlooked and inadequate support offered. The need to support women's rights organisations is emphasised in DFID's Theory of Change however it is not clear how DFID is implementing this principle into practice.

3. At present, many funding streams remain non-gender disaggregated. For example, data on spending totals in peacebuilding funds is not disaggregated to give the proportion directed at activities specifically to promote women's rights and their participation in peacebuilding.¹⁹

4. Given this, it is difficult to assess the proportion of funds given to women's rights organisations by the UK. However, at a conference and roundtable the APG held with women human rights defenders in October 2012, lack of accessibility to funding streams by small women's rights organisations, many of them in rural areas and whose first language was not English was repeatedly stressed by women present. One-tenth of the 1,119 organisations from over 140 countries surveyed by the Association of Women's Rights in Development (AWID) received funding from bilateral, national governments and international non-governmental organisations.²⁰ Only 1.3 percent of the funds for gender equality screened by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which groups the world's main donors, went to women's rights organisations and women's ministries in 2010.²¹

5. There are innovative models that DFID should adopt to ensure accessibility. At present, the APG can find no evidence that DFID supports women's funds which give funding in the small amounts required by women's rights organisations, allow simplified application, reporting and monitoring processes and provide core costs and multi-year funding which ensures sustainability and enables long term planning. They have a critical role in funding organisations that bilateral donors are unable to fund directly by allowing donors to subcontract administrative and partnership work. The Netherlands, the Republic of Ireland and Sweden all fund women's funds.

6. Further, the APG has serious concerns that DFID programming may inadvertently expose WHRDs to risk. They face attacks and intimidation including by powerful elements in society; both because they are working to empower women and because they are women themselves.²² At the APG WHRD conference and parliamentary roundtable, women defenders present engaged in VAWG work stressed that, if increasing attention is being paid by the UK, concurrent work to support and protect WHRDs and organisations engaged in providing services, conducting advocacy and doing social norm and empowerment work is essential. DFID must take steps to develop strategies to mitigate the risk of backlash against women human rights defenders in

¹⁵ This includes unequal power relations between women and men, rigid gender roles, norms and hierarchies and ascribing women lower status in society.

¹⁶ As shown by DFID's mapping of its existing VAWG programmes, available on request from DFID.

¹⁷ For example, see C. Castillejo, 'Building a State that Works for Women: Integrating Gender into Post-Conflict State Building,' *Working Paper 107*, (FRIDE, 2011).

¹⁸ M. Htun and L. Weldon, 'The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975—2005,' 106 (3) *American Political Science Review* August 2012 548, available here: <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8675829>.

¹⁹ Please see the answer given by Baroness Northover, government spokesperson in the House of Lords on International Development to Baroness Hamwee on 22nd October 2012, available here: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/121022w0001.htm#12102222000880>.

²⁰ A. Pittman et al, 2011 *AWID Global Survey: 'Where is the Money for Women's Rights?'* (AWID, 2012), available here: <http://www.awid.org/Library/2011-AWID-Global-Survey-Where-is-the-Money-for-Women-s-Rights-Preliminary-Research-Results>.

²¹ S. Tolmay, *Financing for Gender Equality: Rhetoric Versus Real Financial Support*, (AWID, 2012).

²² United Nations, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Margaret Sekaggya, A/HRC/16/44*, December 2010.

case of hostility, involving defenders and their organisations in their drafting and monitoring.²³ Working closely with the police and others involved in law enforcement to support women's rights is also a key way to mitigate backlash.²⁴ Not only will this protect women who are engaged in prevention and response to gender-based violence but these steps consist of prevention of violence in and of themselves.

7. While welcoming the scaling up of DFID's programming work on VAWG, the APG believes that this must be guided by the principle of 'do no harm' and work must be undertaken to mitigate backlash. The APG has received little indication that this work is being done.

The APG recommends that:

- Effective systems should be put in place to track how much money is being spent on women's rights and who receives this funding, including through tracking all aid using the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gender equality marker.
- A review of funding mechanisms should take place to ensure accessibility and additional, dedicated funding provided to women's rights organisations working on VAWG, including through devolved funding via women's funds and ensuring at least 15 percent of all UK conflict and peacebuilding funds, in line with UN targets,²⁵ are spent on addressing women's specific needs and advancing gender equality.
- Recognition of and protection for women human rights defenders as agents of change should be made a cross-cutting issue throughout all aspects of development work, including in all policies including business strategy, programming, monitoring and evaluation, DFID's priority pillars and through close coordination between DFID and UK embassies in country.
- Security of women human rights defenders should be recognised as a legitimate use of development money with questions related to risk in funding application forms and reporting processes including harassment and insecurity experienced during the project.
- A system to share lessons and training between DFID staff around preventing and responding to attacks and harassment of women human rights defenders encountered in development projects should be put in place.

POLICY COHERENCE AND CROSS WHITEHALL COORDINATION

8. The UK has committed to mainstreaming women, peace and security analysis throughout its work in fragile and conflict affected states. This includes preventing and responding to VAWG, increasing women's participation in formal peace processes, including women's human rights in transitional justice and mainstreaming gender analysis in peacekeeping operations. Although the UK continues to be one of the leaders of the women, peace and security agenda, more needs to be done to translate policy commitments to reality and ensure work on VAWG across the three international departments align and mutually reinforce.

9. The *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* is co-owned by the three international departments and outlines UK government efforts to prevent and respond to VAWG in conflict affected countries, reduce the impact of conflict on women and girls and promote their inclusion in formal conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. Progress has been made in training, country programmes, operations and allocation of staff resources in the past three years. However, the APG continues to be concerned that integrated gender perspectives and the links between VAWG and conflict prevention continue to remain confined to the NAP and not adequately mainstreamed into cross departmental policy on conflict prevention and response.

10. In July 2011 the UK published its *Building Stability Overseas Strategy* (BSOS) where it committed to a whole of government approach to conflict prevention and response. It explicitly recognised that '*conflict and violence have a particularly negative impact on women, children and young people*,' that violent conflict also has particularly catastrophic consequences for women who survive sexual violence and emphasised the centrality of the role of women in building stability.²⁶ Despite these explicit references however, the document contained a limited gender perspective and few tangible commitments to supporting women's participation and tackling VAWG. This trend has continued in its implementation, for example, the draft guidelines to conducting a *Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability* do not require those conducting conflict analysis to take into account the contributions and differential needs of risks experienced by girls, women, boys and men in areas affected by violent conflict. It is unlikely that crisis response and prevention will integrate gender analysis if conflict analysis is not conducted in a gender sensitive manner.

²³ Practical measures are outlined in the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders and Violence against Women: EU Human Rights Defenders Guidelines available here: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/16173cor.en08.pdf> and EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them available here: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/16173cor.en08.pdf>.

²⁴ I. Barcia and A. Penchaszadeh, *Ten Insights to Strengthen Responses for Women Human Rights Defenders at Risk*, (AWID, 2012), available here: <http://www.awid.org/content/download/136703/1522035/file/WHRD%20Ten%20Insights%20ENG.pdf>.

²⁵ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary General on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding,' A/65/354-S/2010/466, October 2010.

²⁶ *Building Stability Overseas Strategy*, July 2011, available here: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/Building-stability-overseas-strategy.pdf>.

The APG recommends that:

- Implementation of the Building Stability Overseas Strategy should recognise VAWG as a core security issue and that women's unequal power in society is a driver of violence conflict, with this understanding being properly reflected in conflict analysis, training, response and guidance.
- A member of the National Security Council should have explicit responsibility for women, peace and security to ensure gender analysis is taken into account in all discussions on stability, peace building and state building.

11. The APG warmly welcomes the Foreign Secretary's *Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative* (PSVI) and the prioritisation of gender-based violence by the UK Government as a key area of foreign policy. However, although ministers have stated that DFID has an important role to play, it remains unclear how DFID fits into the initiative despite the need for coordinated action by donors in order for progress to be made in preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict. Two areas where DFID should support FCO efforts are security and justice sector reform and funding for survivor services.

12. Ensuring existing DFID support builds security and justice systems that are accountable, responsive and women and survivor friendly would prevent abuses by security forces, ends impunity and improve access to justice. All DFID security and justice sector reform (SJSR) programming should be gender sensitive and include measures to tackle VAWG. DFID committed in the 2012 revision of the NAP to integrate women, peace and security considerations into SJSR programming in fragile and conflict affected states. Progress towards achieving this should be monitored by assessing inclusion in country operational plans and business cases in the 2013 evaluation of the NAP.

13. Although VAWG is a predictable and common threat in emergencies,²⁷ specialised and integrated services for survivors are often sidelined and deprioritised. For example, of the \$31m allocated to DRC between January and October 2012, protection received less than 1 percent of funds.²⁸ Understanding that VAWG programming needs to be funded as part of lifesaving humanitarian response from the onset of emergencies onwards is still weak across donors and the international community.

The APG recommends that:

- An assessment of the integration of women, peace and security analysis into UK security and justice sector programming in fragile and conflict affected states should be carried out as part of the 2013 evaluation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.
- DFID should convene a meeting of donors to discuss ways to fill funding gaps to ensure access to safe and confidential health services for survivors of VAWG which respond to psychological trauma and provide emergency reproductive health services.

14. Each country in which DFID operates has an *Operational Plan* which maps the results that will be achieved and how progress will be measured from 2011 to 2015. The majority of these Plans inadequately address women's rights concerns and very few of them mention VAWG.

15. Afghanistan is a focus country for the NAP and one of 27 countries where DFID has dedicated VAWG programming but, despite 87 percent of women experiencing at least one form of violence,²⁹ VAWG is not mentioned in the country Operational Plan. The Committee found in its 2012 report that '*DFID has done very little explicitly on gender issues nor directed funding clearly towards women and girls programmes as can be seen by the lack of gender specific projects.*'³⁰

16. DFID country teams will start developing the next phases of Operational Plans at the start of the 2013–2014 financial year. UK strategies for countries and regions must not only integrate gender analysis and include prioritising the protection and participation of women, but also have coherence with existing women, peace and security policies and plans. These include country policies, including the NAPs developed by countries themselves and the country plans outlined in the bilateral section of the NAP. The Ministerial Champion on VAWG Overseas should lead in driving this forward.

The APG recommends that

- The Ministerial Champion on VAWG Overseas should have the access and resources to drive the agenda forward across Government, especially across the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, DFID and the Ministry of Defence, and report annually to parliament on progress.

²⁷ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on Gender Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings, available here: http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-subsubidi-tf_gender-gbv.

²⁸ Please see the Central Emergency Response Fund website for more details: <http://www.unocha.org/cerf/cerf-worldwide/where-we-work/cod-2012>.

²⁹ Global Rights, *Living with violence: a national report on domestic abuse in Afghanistan*, Global Rights: Partners for Justice, (Global Rights, March 2008), available here: http://www.globalrights.org/site/DocServer/final_DVR_JUNE_16.pdf?docID=9803.

³⁰ International Development Select Committee, *Afghanistan: Development progress and prospects after 2014*, Sixth Report of Session 2012–13, (House of Commons, 2012), p. 65, available here: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmintdev/403/403.pdf>.

- All DFID Operational Plans should be required to outline how to address VAWG as part of their wider programming. In fragile and conflict affected states and countries in transition all DFID operational plans should reference the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and outline how the UK will meet its women, peace and security commitments.

MAXIMISING OPPORTUNITIES TO INFLUENCE THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA

17. The UK continues to be a key international development voice. The months ahead offer important opportunities where the UK has the influence to intensify international, regional and national efforts to respond to and prevent VAWG. As outlined above, the UK is prioritising VAWG during its G8 presidency. The 2013 Commission on the Status of Women will focus on the elimination and prevention of violence against women and girls. The APG welcomes the emphasis DFID has placed on working with like minded states to ensure strong conclusions that do not erode the existing human rights framework. This commitment needs to be sustained, including through the Prime Minister's co-chairship of the High Level Panel on the Post 2015 Development Agenda.³¹

The APG recommends that:

- The UK should show leadership at the Commission on the Status of Women to protect existing human rights commitments and supports the call by the UN Convened Expert Group for the development of an international implementation plan to end VAWG.
- The UK should promote the inclusion of a specific target on reducing VAWG under a standalone goal on gender in the post 2015 development framework.

The Associate Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace and Security (APG) is a cross-party parliamentary forum for the discussion and critical analysis of issues relating to women, peace and security. This includes the implementation of international human rights law, including United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960. It seeks to promote and highlight the vital role women play in peacebuilding, conflict resolution and post conflict reconstruction. The UK government reports to it on an annual basis on progress made against the *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* (NAP).

The APG would like to thank members of Gender Action on Peace and Security for their support in producing this evidence, in particular ActionAid, Amnesty International UK, International Rescue Committee UK, Oxfam, Saferworld and Womankind Worldwide.

February 2013

Written evidence submitted by the Bond Disability and Development Group

THE CASE FOR A GREATER FOCUS ON DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS

1. SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

1.1. Disabled women and girls are twice as likely to experience gender-based violence than non-disabled women and girls: one in seven women and girls are disabled; they are twice as likely to experience sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation than their non-disabled peers; and they face greater obstacles in reporting abuse and accessing support, justice and rehabilitation services.

1.2. Despite this, disabled women and girls are largely invisible in current violence against women and girls (VAWG) analysis and programmes which often fail to adequately recognise and tackle the multiple intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women, including disability, which intensify vulnerability to gender based violence (GBV).

1.3. Human Rights instruments, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) require all States to take action to address VAWG and to ensure that disabled women and girls are reached and included in such initiatives.

1.4. DFID policy and practice in this area should pay greater attention to the issues faced by disabled women and girls and take steps to gather evidence and deepen learning in order to ensure their effective inclusion.

1.5. DFID should take a leadership role on developing campaigns to challenge the social norms underpinning VAWG which involve the active participation of disabled women and girls and which highlight unequal power relations between disabled and non-disabled people as well as between men and women.

1.6. Cross cutting policies on inclusive development need to be introduced within DFID to drive and support a greater focus on disability issues in the context of VAWG and other key areas of development. We welcome the forthcoming inquiry on disability inclusion as a positive step forward.

³¹ For more information, please see J. Woodroffe and E. Esplen, Gender equality and the post-2015 framework, (Gender and Development Network, July 2012), available here: <http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk/storage/GADN%20Briefing%203%20-%20Gender%20equality%20and%20the%20post-2015%20framework.pdf>.

2. BOND DISABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP (DDG)

2.1. The member organisations of DDG represent a large body of experience based on direct work with disabled people, their organisations and the disability movement in developing countries, as well as advocacy and policy engagement with service providers and policymakers. As a result DDG is able to draw on a broad and deep understanding of the challenges faced by disabled people, the links between disability and poverty, and the importance of including disability issues within the development process.

3. VIOLENCE AGAINST DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS: THE CURRENT SITUATION

3.1. According to the recent WHO Report on Disability (2011), 15% of the world's population are disabled people, and disability prevalence rates among women are higher than among men. International studies (cited in the 2012 report of the Working Group on Violence Against Women with Disabilities, 'Forgotten Sisters') have concluded that women with disabilities suffered an equal, or up to three times greater, risk of rape by a stranger or acquaintance, than their non-disabled peers, while the same report states that **'Women with disabilities are twice as likely to experience domestic violence and other forms of gender-based and sexual violence as non-disabled women**, and are likely to experience abuse over a longer period of time and to suffer more severe injuries as a result of the violence.' A small 2004 survey in India found that virtually all women and girls with disabilities were beaten at home, 25% of women with intellectual disabilities had been raped and 6% of disabled women had been forcibly sterilised.

3.2. Disabled women and girls are **disempowered as a result of multiple and intersecting forms disadvantage**. The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women notes that VAWG is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women: a similar imbalance of power exists between disabled and non-disabled people and consequently disabled women and girls are doubly disempowered. Furthermore, disability often interacts with other forms of social disadvantage and discrimination, such as age or ethnicity—in addition to gender—which combine to intensify vulnerability to violence.

3.3. Disabled women and girls are **routinely excluded from prevention, information and support services** as a result of their double marginalisation (by gender and disability) which leaves them isolated and excluded from participating in various mainstream settings (educational institutions, workplaces, social groups) where information and support services which aim to prevent GBV are channeled.

3.4. **GBV can be a major cause of disability**, or increased disability, among women and girls. Women who are disabled as a result of domestic or GBV are then further marginalised and disadvantaged—factors which can lead to further violence. In South Africa, Rose and her daughter Nokwazi were both blinded as a result of constant physical abuse at the hands of Nokwazi's father. Rose said 'I don't think the blindness was caused by one incident...I think slowly I was getting damaged' and she spoke of her daughter's reluctance to report the cause of her blindness; 'it's because the father said if you tell I will kill you'.

3.5. Disabled women and girls are subject to same types of violence as all women, but there are additional factors relating to the individual's form of impairment and her social status as a disabled woman/girl, which can give rise to **disability-related abuse** and violence, such as leaving a woman who is not independently mobile without assistance or isolated for long periods to 'punish' her. Disabled women and girls do not represent a homogenous group, so the dynamics of abuse depend on the type and extent of impairment, but many of the factors which intensify vulnerability are common to the majority of disabled women, such as economic dependence, low self-esteem and confidence, and social isolation.

3.6. Disabled women and girls may find it **more difficult to escape abuse**. The stigma and social isolation associated with disability means that disabled women and girls may endure violence for longer periods of time than their non-disabled counterparts. Depending on the nature and severity of their impairment, disabled women and girls may be extremely dependent on caregivers and family or community members, thereby creating opportunity for the perpetration of violence and abuse while simultaneously limiting options for escaping an abusive relationship.

3.7. Disabled women and girls are particularly vulnerable to **sexual violence and abuse** as a result of their extreme marginalisation, social isolation, and dependence. This is compounded by common assumptions such as that they are non-sexual or unable to conceive which may lead to their exclusion from protection, information and services. Disabled women are easy prey for sexual exploitation within the family, and disabled women and girls are also vulnerable to rape in contexts where men misguidedly believe that sex with a virgin will cure HIV/AIDS. They are also vulnerable to sexual exploitation or trafficking in situations where families see this as the only economic option, while exploiters see disabled women and girls as less likely to complain or run away: in Thailand, UNICEF has found that brothel owners have specifically sought deaf girls and adolescents for this reason.

3.8. Women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to **forced sterilisation** which is carried out on disabled women and girls without their consent for a number of reasons including preventing pregnancy (including that resulting from sexual abuse); stopping menstruation in order to facilitate personal care; and for birth control where disabled women are deemed to be incapable or unfit mothers. This practice remains widespread, despite being identified as a violation of human rights (UN Human Rights Council and Committee

Against Torture), and despite guidelines issued by the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics which define it as an ‘act of violence’.

3.9. While all women and girls are vulnerable to GBV in **situations of conflict and post-conflict**, disabled women are particularly vulnerable. At the same time, violence relating to conflict is also a major cause of disability among affected or displaced populations. In a recent report on displaced populations in post-conflict Northern Uganda (Human Rights Watch) a disabled woman describes how ‘when food is being given, sometimes persons with disabilities are given what others leave behind on their plates’. The same report found many disabled women remaining in camps long after others have returned home because they are physically and economically unable to leave as a result of their disability. In this context disabled women are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in order to secure their basic needs.

4. DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS FACE BARRIERS TO ESCAPING VIOLENCE, REPORTING CRIMES AND ACCESSING JUSTICE, CARE AND RECOVERY SERVICES

4.1. Many disabled women and girls **do not report violence and abuse**. The reasons for this are multiple and complex, including low levels of confidence and self-esteem as a result of their low status and disempowerment; social isolation; fear of abandonment, loss of financial support and care; fear of loss of children where there may be negative assumptions about their ability to care for children; and high levels of dependency on caregivers, who in many cases may also be the perpetrators of the abuse.

4.2. **Information** on women and girls’ rights in relation to GBV, and on support and justice services, often **fails to reach disabled women and girls** as a result of social isolation, low levels of education and communication barriers. This situation is often the result of lack of awareness and training among policymakers and practitioners: even where organisations believe that they are offering services to all women and girls, few recognise the need to take special measures to ensure equal access, and to develop policies and training to support these measures. A recent study of service providers in South Africa (‘On the Margins’) found that disproportionately few disabled women were included, and that none of these had sensory or intellectual impairments.

4.3. The devaluation of disabled people in general, and disabled women and girls in particular, leads to a **lack of support for those who seek justice and support services**. Police stations and health facilities are often physically inaccessible, while many disabled women and girls face financial and communication barriers in accessing these services independently. Police and other professionals often lack the awareness and skills needed to support disabled women and girls reporting abuse, and this is often compounded by an unwillingness to give credence or weight to their testimony (particularly women and girls with learning difficulties). In many cases the testimony of disabled women (particularly those with learning difficulties) is inadmissible within the legal system: A mother in Kenya was told that her daughter of 13, who had been raped, would not be able to pursue the case ‘as the girl is deaf and disabled and cannot be able to give evidence in court’.

5. INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS RELATING TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

5.1. A **human rights approach** requires VAWG programmes to be developed based on the principles of meaningful participation of stakeholders, accountability, non-discrimination and equality of outcomes for different groups of people regardless of their status or identity. This implies giving priority to those groups of women and girls whose rights are often ignored, and taking specific action to ensure their inclusion.

5.2. The **UNCRPD** ratified by the UK notes the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by disabled women and girls and the obligation of States to take appropriate measures addressing this (Article 6). It also highlights the gender-based aspects of violence and abuse experienced by disabled people and obliges States to ‘prevent the occurrence of all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse.’ The **Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** addresses the concerns of women with disabilities in a number of its recommendations, and one of its recommendation (18) focuses specifically on women with disabilities. The **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**—Paragraph 126(d) calls for ‘special measures to eliminate violence against women, particularly those in vulnerable situations, such as ... women with disabilities’. Other relevant instruments include the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**.

5.3. There is broad consensus that the current development goals (MDGs) do not adequately address inequality and marginalisation, and it is likely that the **post-2015 international development framework** will focus more sharply on equality. If so, it will be necessary to develop thinking, knowledge, skills and resources to include more effectively those who are currently overlooked in all areas of development, such as disabled women and girls.

6. INVISIBILITY OF DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS WITHIN VAWG ANALYSIS AND PROGRAMMING

Despite the significance of disability as a factor which compounds vulnerability to GBV, and the obligation to address this within the human rights framework, there is a prevailing **lack of awareness of this issue among policymakers, practitioners and communities**, linked to the social isolation and low status of disabled women and girls which means that they are less visible at all levels of society. In the context of VAWG, their invisibility is compounded by the low numbers of disabled women and girls who are able to report their experience of

GBV, and by their absence in justice and support services which currently fail to reach or include them. Linked to this vicious circle of invisibility and exclusion, there has been limited research into this issue, and much of the research to date has been carried out in a developed country context, with a focus on the problem rather than on solutions.

6.1. As with other areas of development, there have been difficulties in ensuring that **multi-disciplinary approaches** are developed in VAWG programmes: Disability tends to be overlooked in GBV programmes (underpinned by CEDAW), while disability focused work (underpinned by the UNCRPD) tends to overlook GBV. In her recent report, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women With Disabilities notes that ‘The lack of an intersectional approach can lead to the reinforcing of one form of discrimination in attempts to alleviate another.’

7. HOW CAN VAWG PROGRAMMES BECOME MORE INCLUSIVE OF DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS?

7.1. **Develop multi-sectoral, holistic approaches** through greater collaboration and coordination between the Disability and Women’s Movements, and between organisations and departments working on disability issues and on GBV issues.

7.2. **Greater attention in prevention programmes to factors which contribute to violence against disabled women and girls:** Action to challenge and change social norms should focus on those power structures which underpin disability discrimination as well as gender discrimination, including violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours, community norms, institutional practices and systems, laws and policies.

7.3. **Address barriers to disabled women and girls in accessing services and support:** This requires active steps to reach disabled women and girls and to identify and address the barriers which exclude them. Developing inclusive practices and structures needs to be seen as an obligation—not a choice.

7.4. **Take action to promote the voices of disabled women and girls in the process of changing social norms:** Channels for empowerment and mobilisation of disabled women and girls within and beyond the Women’s Movement need to be identified and supported. One aspect of this will be to support the participation of disabled women and girls in the VAWG Global Implementation Plan and the Global Advocacy Campaign.

7.5. **Improve understanding on links between disability and VAWG** through research and other learning processes. The disaggregation of data in VAWG programmes (by disability as well as gender, age etc.) would be a key element of gathering evidence and learning.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE

8.1. Greater attention should be given to issues affecting disabled women and girls in the context of VAWG in DFID’s analysis, research, policies and guidelines. This will need to be supported by investment in research and learning in this area in order to develop effective programme responses. DFID’s How To Note and Practical Guide for programme work on VAWG mentions disability, but the documents do not currently give the issue sufficient attention to ensure that responses to VAWG are effective in including disabled women and girls, given that levels of awareness of disability issues across all development sectors tends to be low.

8.2. There should be a clear requirement for programmes to address disability issues and to include disabled women and girls in calls for funding proposals; accountability procedures; and learning processes. This should be supported by a requirement for data to be disaggregated by disability, drawing on current best practice in this area such as the Washington Group Guidelines. Although the DFID Practice Guidelines encourage disability to be considered, the implication is that disabled women and girls are a ‘group’ that may or may not be targeted. The Guidelines themselves do not include any case studies on disabled women or girls, and neither are they mentioned in any of the examples given—this demonstrates how easy it is for disability issues to be overlooked where there is no requirement to include them.

8.3. Disabled women and girls should be centrally involved in campaigning to challenge the social norms which underpin VAWG. We urge DFID to put its weight behind campaigns which expose and challenge the discriminatory attitudes and practices which contribute to such high levels of violence and abuse against disabled women and girls. DFID’s guidelines rightly emphasise the importance of transforming gender power relations, but there is little recognition of the many dimensions of power relations—in addition to gender—which impact on levels of VAWG, such as the fundamental imbalance of power between disabled and non-disabled people. Greater attention needs to be given to channels of empowerment outside the Women’s Movement, such as Disabled People’s Organisations where disabled women, who may feel marginalised within the mainstream women’s movement, are often more likely to build initial confidence and skills.

8.4. Action to ensure the inclusion of disabled women and girls in VAWG programmes must be supported by a more holistic approach to disability inclusion across all DFID policy areas at all levels. Practical steps towards this would include: The creation of a policy on inclusive development approaches; a TOC and practice guidelines on disability inclusion; and the appointment of a senior resource person to drive these processes

forward. We welcome the forthcoming inquiry on disability issues as a key step in securing progress on this issue.

January 2013

Written evidence submitted by the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG)

The British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG) is an information and advocacy network of 30 British and Irish NGOs that support humanitarian and development programmes in Afghanistan. This written submission has been prepared by BAAG's Secretariat; its content may not represent the views of all BAAG member agencies.

ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|--|
| ANP | Afghan National Police |
| ANSF | Afghan National Security Forces |
| BAAG | British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group |
| CERF | Central Emergency Response Fund |
| CAP | Consolidated Emergency Appeal |
| CSW | Commission on the Status of Women |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| ERF | Emergency Response Fund |
| EU | European Union |
| EUPOL | European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan |
| EVAW | Elimination of Violence Against Women |
| FCO | Foreign and Commonwealth Office |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goal |
| MoD | Ministry of Defence |
| NAPWA | National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan |
| STI | Sexually transmitted infection |
| TMAF | Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework |
| UK | United Kingdom, the |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNAMA | United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan |
| UNSCR | UN Security Council Resolution |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| VAWG | Violence Against Women and Girls |
| WBRA | Watch on Basic Rights Afghanistan Organisation |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The true extent of violence against women and girls in (VAWG) Afghanistan remains unknown. Some estimates suggest that violence against women and girls across Afghanistan is endemic. Since the fall of the Taliban, the media has increasingly brought attention to this issue. VAWG comes in many forms, and hinders progress towards several key development goals, such as access to healthcare, education, the judicial system, and other basic services, and thus should be treated by the Afghan government and international community as an urgent issue.
- DFID has a large presence in Afghanistan and is the third largest bilateral donor in the country. It is committed to gender equality and works through Tawanmandi project to support women initiatives in the country. However, a recent IDC report finds little evidence that DFID's women protection commitment is translated into programmatic and funding priorities. We recommend that DFID continues to support Afghan women organisations through Tawanmandi project but also works directly with them.
- Reproductive healthcare in Afghanistan has improved in general but coverage and services are still limited. Afghanistan still has the second highest level of maternal mortality in the world.³² Family planning programs that are culturally sensitive have been successful in the country. We recommend that DFID commits itself to improving reproductive healthcare in Afghanistan.
- There have been strides made in providing education to the Afghan girls. However, insecurity and inadequate infrastructure are often cited as impediments to sending girls to school. We recommend DFID work with those programmes focused on educational services to make attending school a safer experience for girls.

³² Afghanistan: maternal health factors improve, but high death rate continues—UN report, United Nations, 26 January 2009 <http://www.un.org/apps/news/storv.asp?NewsID=29663&Cr=maternal&Cr1#.UQpoDB3ZbTo>

- The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) and the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) law address violence against women in the country. Both, however, suffer from incomplete implementation or a general lack of awareness of their existence. Women find it difficult to access the formal judicial system, and therefore turn to the informal institutions which allow for a culture of impunity to flourish. We recommend that DFID focuses on improving women's rights within the country.
- Women in prominent public roles have increasingly been harassed or become victims of violence. There has been little legal action taken against the perpetrators, or to help those who continue their public work.
- Despite the fact that humanitarian needs are likely to increase during and after transition, the Consolidated Emergency Appeal (CAP) for Afghanistan is one of the worst funded. Meanwhile, the gender ratings for the Afghanistan Emergency Response Fund (ERF) are the lowest in the world. We recommend that DFID does more to improve gender sensitivity in humanitarian responses in Afghanistan.
- The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) has very few women in its ranks. By increasing the number of female officers, women would feel more comfortable reporting violence against them, and the complaints would be taken more seriously. BAAG welcomes the work DFID is undertaking with the Ministry of Interior in increasing knowledge of women's rights and awareness of violence against women.
- Afghanistan must meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2020. As women's rights are a point of contention between the government and insurgent groups, there are concerns that they may be compromised for peace and reintegration. The Afghan government and DFID should work to ensure that women's rights are protected in the post 2015 framework, and ending violence against women is specifically targeted within a dedicated goal for women's empowerment and gender equality.

INTRODUCTION

1. Under the Taliban, women faced a harsh existence where violence was commonplace and most often publicly enforced. The effect of fundamentalist policies restricted women's participation in public life and particularly access to healthcare and education which led to high levels of illiteracy and avoidable deaths.

2. The 2001 international military intervention employed a strand of discourse clearly linked to defending women's human rights.³³ Since 2001, many gains have been made for Afghan women. A quota system was introduced which has seen greater numbers of female MPs. Women are represented in sub-national governance structures, such as Community Development Councils and Provincial Peace Councils. Girls' access to education has increased dramatically although many still remain out of school.

3. Broadly, VAWG in Afghanistan is interlinked with many cultural, social, economic and political issues. It is both affected and results in lack of access to education, healthcare, justice and other public services. While its true extent remains unknown, evidence suggest that it is endemic.³⁴ With the increase and improvement of free media in Afghanistan, VAWG issues have increasingly been brought to public attention.

DFID'S ROLE IN TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN AFGHANISTAN

4. DFID has a large presence in Afghanistan and is the third largest bilateral donor in the country. DFID has committed funding of £178 million a year until at least 2017, which is welcome. DFID's Operational Plan for Afghanistan outlines its commitment in the UK National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 which includes the prevention of violence against women by 'mainstreaming gender into conflict prevention activities and strategies and strengthening efforts to prevent violence against women'. BAAG welcomes the support from the Secretary of State for International Development who has outlined supporting women's rights as a priority in Afghanistan.³⁵

5. A recent International Development Select Committee inquiry Afghanistan; Development Progress and Prospects after 2014 highlighted that whilst DFID is committed to 'protecting and promoting the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan there is little practical evidence of this in either programming or funding'. It further recommended that DFID should do more to provide access to legal services and support women's shelters. BAAG welcomes this recommendation as a way in which the UK Government can contribute to countering the enormous challenges faced by Afghan women.

6. In Kabul, DFID attends both the Gender Donor Coordination Group (UN Women-led) as well as the Civil Society Support Group (UNAMA-led). Consideration is currently being given to how the commitments in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) for women's rights, which were very welcome, will be taken forwards.

³³ Cherie Blair pleads for Afghan Women, Lucy Ward (The Guardian), 20 November 2001 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2001/nov/20/uk.september11>.

³⁴ Afghan women's right on the brink, Actionaid, June 2012.

³⁵ Afghanistan: Development Progress and Prospects after 2014: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2012–13, International Development Committee, 10 January 2013.

7. DFID is a major contributor to the Tawanmandi civil society programme which has gender as a cross-cutting theme across its work. Tawanmandi has supported a number of projects focussing on Afghan women including a 6 month project with Watch on Basic Rights Afghanistan Organisation (WBRA) across 13 provinces on advocacy on the rights of victims of violence especially women and girls. This project aimed to improve the level of awareness, accessibility, accountability and quality of Afghanistan's statutory and community-based justice and security systems amongst women and girls. It worked to highlight the rights of survivors of injustice and produced and broadcast TV documentaries on justice issues. The project reached 250,000 women and girls.³⁶

8. BAAG welcomes the UK's support to civil society through Tawanmandi, however it should be recognised that Tawanmandi is evolving slowly and other ways to directly support Afghan civil society working on violence against women, especially women's rights organizations, could deliver beneficial results. Many women's rights organisations have indicated that they are unable to plan for their programmes tackling violence against women and girls in the long term because their funding is unpredictable and precarious.

9. More support for work that aims to address gender inequality and improve relations between men and women by involving men is needed in Afghanistan. Afghan civil society organisations have a growing body of evidence that when men learn of the benefits of having female relatives who are educated, generating income and have higher self-confidence; the prevalence of domestic violence begins to fall. Other programs targeted for boys and men that address the concept of masculinity and the power relations between men and women have been successful as well. Realising intended outcomes in tackling VAWG requires patience, flexibility and above all fortitude. Afghan organisations are willing and able to take this work on—they require appropriate financial support and a long-term commitment to do so.

Recommendations:

10. DFID should consider providing sustainable support directly to civil society groups, especially women's rights organizations, in addition to funding Tawanmandi that work specifically on tackling violence against women and girls.

11. DFID should consider funding projects that work with men on tackling gender inequality as vital agents in realising change.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

12. Whilst the Basic Package of Health Services has gone some way to providing and extending healthcare in Afghanistan, coverage and services remain limited. Particularly where sexual violence occurs, it is important to ensure women and girls can access adequate reproductive healthcare services.

13. Maternal mortality rates among Afghan women are amongst the highest in the world with a women dying every two hours from pregnancy related causes in Afghanistan.³⁷ Significant progress has however been made over the last decade but much more needs to be done. Providing comprehensive family planning choices through a culturally considerate approach can cut levels of both maternal deaths and infant and child mortality. There were 169,468 Marie Stopes International contraceptive users in 2011 in Afghanistan and they estimate its work has averted 8,000 unsafe abortions in the same year.³⁸

14. Abortion in Afghanistan remains highly restrictive, however new guidelines on post abortion care have been introduced. This means Afghan women are able to receive care after unsafe abortion or complications from miscarriages. As well as receiving emergency treatment, women can receive post-abortion family planning and HIV services.

15. Whilst the legal age for girls to marry has been increased, there are still cases of underage and forced marriage. Girls who are forced to marry young are more vulnerable to domestic violence and the transmission of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Complications during pregnancy and childbirth arise due to the mother's age, and the children can often have medical issues as well (low birth weight, anaemia, and inadequate nutrition). The young girls are also more likely to develop cervical cancer later in life.³⁹ While the increase in the legal marriage age of girls from 16 to 17 is welcome, its significance is yet to be seen. As few marriages are legally registered in Afghanistan, the punishment for underage marriage ie not legally registering them hardly makes any difference.

Recommendations:

16. In July 2012, the UK Government co-hosted the London Summit on Family Planning. There, a commitment was made to support 120 million extra women and girls in the world's poorest countries to access family planning services, supplies and information without coercion or discrimination by 2020.⁴⁰ Whilst DFID

³⁶ GAPS 'Summary of Tawanmandi projects that focus on Afghan women', Internal document (see attached).

³⁷ Maternal Mortality, World Health Organization, May 2012 <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs348/en/index.html>

³⁸ Where in the World: Afghanistan, Maria Stopes International <http://www.mariestopes.org/where-in-the-world/afghanistan>

³⁹ "Til Death do us Part": Understanding the Sexual and Reproductive Health Risks of Early Marriage, The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada http://iwhp.soqc.org/index.DhD?Daa:e=early-marriage&hfcen_US

⁴⁰ London Summit on Family Planning, UK Aid <http://www.londonfamilyplanningsummit.co.uk/>

is not heavily involved in the healthcare sector in Afghanistan, consideration should be given to earmarking funds through a specific budget line to reproductive health and rights.

17. USAID, the World Bank and the European Commission currently lead and co-ordinate the donor community on health in Afghanistan. Given the relative weakness of other development partners on reproductive health we urge DFID to review their position and/or to encourage other bilateral donors to give more focus, commitment and resources to reproductive health. DFID's current Afghanistan operational plan does not have a budget line for health (or more specifically on MDG5), despite health being an overarching priority for DFID.

18. Provide comprehensive, affordable and non-discriminatory support services for women who have experienced rape or sexual abuse. Medical interventions include emergency contraception, prevention and treatment of STIs including HIV/AIDS, and treatment of injuries. Women who choose not to continue with a pregnancy that has resulted from rape should where legal be able to access safe abortion services quickly and confidentially. Psychosocial, legal and economic support should also be provided.

EDUCATION

19. Access to education has improved dramatically over the last decade with more than three million girls going to school. However in some areas, children still have to travel long distances to school. Some studies have shown that parents are often more reluctant to let girls walk long distances for fears of their safety. As Afghanistan goes through its military transition, it is likely that insecurity in some areas will deteriorate which could affect the number of girls attending school. Reports of girls being harassed, threatened with violence and kidnapped on their way to school have been reported.

20. Some opposition to educating girls remain although even the Taliban have, to some extent, changed its policy about allowing girls to receive education. Reluctance to send girls to school and opposition from within the community often emerges as a result of inadequate facilities. For example, no toilet facilities and no boundary walls are provided. In some cases, girls have been the victims of poisoning at schools.

Recommendation:

21. Programmes aimed at improving girls' enrolment should also focus on those issues that prevent girls from attending and staying in school. Improving the infrastructure and reducing the threat of violence are foremost among these.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

22. The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) and the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) law provide two important policy and legal frameworks for addressing the issue of violence against Afghan women and girls.

23. The NAPWA is a central component of Afghanistan's effort to implement its commitments to women in accordance with the Afghanistan Compact. It sets out 35 commitments to help tackle violence against women and provides policy guidance to relevant Afghan government departments for improving the fulfilment of women's rights. However, its implementation has been widely recognised as slow and insufficient. This is partly because of a lack of resources and capacity at the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which has struggled to secure the funding necessary to implement its priority plans and goals.

24. In 2009 the government of Afghanistan passed EVAW.⁴¹ This calls for the protection of women against twenty-two acts which would be deemed a violent act upon a woman (rape, forced marriage, battery, forced prostitution, intimidation, etc.). The penalty for committing one of these acts ranges from paying the dowry for the woman or imprisonment to death. The judiciary is increasingly using this law, but awareness of the law among judges, the police, and women themselves remains low and enforcement is therefore still weak, especially in rural areas. Some of the violent cases that were reported were dropped or mediated, even in cases of murder.⁴²

25. While there has been improvement to the legal system in Afghanistan, women still face obstacles when attempting to gain legal justice. The patriarchal cultural beliefs, customs, and practices, lack of money to pursue a case, and the inability to travel from rural to urban areas inhibit their ability to appeal to a court of justice. This also makes it difficult to deal directly with male police personnel. Instead, women are more likely to turn to the informal justice systems.⁴³ *Shuras* and *Jirgas* are more accessible to the general public. These institutions, however, are more likely to ignore international and national protocols and laws that protect women's rights. They can often put pressure on the woman to withdraw her complain, hand down extremely

⁴¹ Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW), Government of Afghanistan <http://sqdatabase.unwomen.org/uploads/EVAW%20law%20-%202009.pdf>

⁴² 'Long way to go' to stop violence against women in Afghanistan, U.N. report says, Victoria Cavaliere (New York Daily News), 11 December 2012 <http://www.nvdailynews.com/news/world/violence-women-persists-afghanistan-u-n-report-article-1.1217646>

⁴³ Assessing Gendered Access to Justice in Afghanistan, Hangama Anwari, Cheshmak Farhoumand-Sims and Krista Nerland, December 2009, page 3 <http://www.nsi-ins.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/2009-Assessing-Gendered-Access-to-Justice-in-Afghanistan.pdf>

lenient punishments to the violators of women rights, or force women into unacceptable or dangerous situations, including being forced to marry her rapist. This reinforces the culture of impunity and lawlessness.

26. This culture of impunity allows for continued domestic violence, which is reported as widespread although no-one knows the true extent.⁴⁴ With little legal recourse, cases of self-immolation are the response of women in society facing constant discrimination and often violence and abuse within the home. Whilst several specialist burns units have been set up to provide appropriate care and services, not all women can access this level of specialist care. In 2011 the Afghan Government launched a media campaign to address the increasing problem of self-immolation through the media.⁴⁵ However many women are still hospitalised for serious burns each year. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission warned in November 2012 that the number of self-immolation cases had increased, particularly in the north of the country last year.⁴⁶

Recommendations:

27. The UK government should comprehensively promote and prioritise women's rights in the next DFID operational plan, including more effective support to ensure substantial, progressive implementation of the elimination of EVAW law.

28. The UK government should increase advocacy and practical support from DFID and other UK government departments as appropriate for more effective recruitment, retention and participation of female police officers and a more responsive judiciary.

29. The UK and EU partners should work to intensify collective efforts to improve the awareness of and responsiveness of Afghan police towards the needs, rights and roles of women and girls, especially through the EUPOL police training mission.

30. The UK government should accelerate the scale up of financial and technical support for promoting women's rights and the elimination of EVAW within DFID's current Tawanmandi civil society support programmes.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

31. Afghan women taking on prominent public roles and defending human rights have found themselves the victim of harassment and violence. Leading women have also been assassinated in recent months. For instance, in December 2012, Najia Sediqi, the acting head of women affairs directorate in Laghman province was gunned down six months after her predecessor was assassinated. Women human rights defenders, journalists, artists and others in public life, constantly receive threats from traditionalist elements.

32. In most cases, the Afghan government has not been able to bring the perpetrators before the court. This inhibits the number of women who seek public office as they are more vulnerable to attack than their male counterparts.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES

33. Humanitarian needs are likely to increase during transition yet capacity to respond is currently weak and humanitarian leadership in Afghanistan has been poor. Donors have not seen it as a priority, and the Consolidated Emergency Appeal (CAP) for 2012 was one of the worst funded globally.

34. Like the other pooled funds, the Afghanistan pooled fund represents an important source of funding for both international and national NGOs, with 59% of funding going to international NGOs and 41% going to national NGOs. Like other pooled funds, projects applying for funding from the Afghanistan Emergency Response Fund (ERF) are required to use the Gender Marker. This instrument has the potential to strengthen the gender focus of ERF funded projects.

35. However, in the case of Afghanistan the gender ratings are low, in fact lower than other ERFs. This is in part because the majority of the projects funded are shelter and land restoration projects and gender and vulnerability issues are less easily identifiable within them. Nevertheless, DFID through its role as a member of the ERF Review Board could play a useful role in encouraging the ERF in Afghanistan to improve learning as to what are effective mechanisms to improve gender sensitivity in humanitarian response in Afghanistan.

36. The largest UN pooled fund is the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which the UK government was instrumental in establishing in 2006 and the UK has subsequently been the fund's largest single donor. According to the 2011 CERF 5 year evaluation, funded project proposals in Afghanistan paid relatively little attention to gender or other cross-cutting issues. On the positive side the evaluation found that the CERF in Afghanistan demonstrated its added value in such a complex protracted humanitarian crisis, able to respond to humanitarian needs in a context where many donors focus almost exclusively on development needs.

⁴⁴ Afghan women's right on the brink, Actionaid, June 2012.

⁴⁵ Afghans launch self-immolation campaign, Jill McGivering (BBC News), 6 September 2011. ., <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-14810719>

⁴⁶ Self-immolation in North Afghanistan Increasing: AIHRC, Tolo News, 15 November 2012. <http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/8358-self-immolation-in-north-afghanistan-increasing-aihrc->

37. Like the ERF, DFID could enhance the positive impact CERF funded projects have on gender issues and women's empowerment in Afghanistan, by using its considerable influence in relation to the fund both at the global level as well as within humanitarian circles in Afghanistan.

TRANSITION AND THE ANSF

38. Afghanistan will finish its military transition in 2014. Whilst predictions and scenario planning report a variety of outcomes with some commentators predicting civil war, some areas of the country are likely to at least temporarily, experience deteriorating security for local populations. Women still make up a very small proportion of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police (ANSF) and these organisations are struggling to recruit women.

39. BAAG welcomes the work DFID is doing with the Afghan Ministry of Interior in improving knowledge on Afghan women's rights and increasing awareness of violence against women with police.⁴⁷ Ultimately only the greater inclusion of women, particularly in the ANP, will ensure ANP is approachable by women and that complaints of violence are taken seriously.

40. The UK contributes to the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL) police training mission that assists the Afghan National Police in providing training on human rights, women's rights and gender awareness. However, the EUPOL mission remains relatively small—it has slowly grown to approximately 550 staff. In relation to the scale of the task, the UK funding and personnel (about 19 staff) have been very small indeed.

41. Achieving this will require parallel reforms in both the security and justice sectors on these interrelated issues. For example, increasing the number of women in the police is an essential step towards ensuring the sensitivity of the police force to the differing security needs of women and men, and towards promoting the ability of the police to take appropriate preventative and responsive measures in relation to sexual and gender-based crimes, including improved implementation of the EVAW law.

POST 2015 FRAMEWORK

42. Afghanistan has to meet the MDGs by 2020. In the lead-up to 2020, it has to overcome numerous political, economic and security challenges that can hinder the successful achievements of MDGs. As women rights and fundamental freedoms is a major bone of contention between insurgent groups and the Afghan government, there are concerns that they may be comprised for the sake of peace and reintegration. The post-2015 framework will have important consequences for Afghanistan particularly the Afghan women.

Recommendations

43. Work to ensure 57th session of Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on violence against women has strong agreed conclusions that protect existing agreed human rights commitments, are focused on prevention and access to comprehensive services, and recommend the inclusion of a specific target on ending violence against women and girls as part of a dedicated standalone goal on gender equality within the post-2015 framework.

44. Work to ensure the post-2015 framework includes a specific target on ending violence against women and girls within a dedicated standalone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DFID'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS WORK

45. End violence against women and girls worldwide by continuing to make it a foreign and development policy priority, adopting a clear and effective cross-government strategy, and investing in the expertise required to deliver on commitments made.

46. Pursue a coherent and coordinated cross-government approach to addressing violence against women and girls internationally—including all development, conflict, security and humanitarian agendas—by revising the international section of the cross-government strategy on violence against women and girls and adding a framework for monitoring impacts, to align it with DFID's new Theory of Change for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls and related guidance.

47. Ensure the Ministerial Champion on Violence Against Women and Girls Overseas has the access, authority and resources to drive this strategy forward across government, especially across the FCO, DFID and MoD, and reports annually to parliament on progress.

48. Recognise the catalytic role women's rights organisations play in tackling VAWG and embed a commitment to actively support women's rights organisations across VAWG policy, programming and funding, including by: providing additional, dedicated funding to women's rights organisations working on VAWG; increasing devolved funding for VAWG through women's funds that have strong partnerships with women's rights organisations in developing countries; and ensuring at least 15% of all UK conflict peace-building funds,

⁴⁷ Afghanistan: Development Progress and Prospects after 2014: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2012–13, International Development Committee, 10 January 2013.

in line with UN targets, are spent on addressing women's specific needs and advancing gender equality or empowering women, including by directly financing women's rights organisations. Broadly, more effective systems are needed for tracking how much money is spent on women's rights, and who receives this funding, including through tracking all aid using the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gender equality marker.

February 2013

Written evidence submitted by Christian Aid

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Christian Aid is a Christian organisation that insists the world can and must be swiftly changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. We work globally in 45 countries for profound change that eradicates the causes of poverty, striving to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all, regardless of faith or nationality. We are part of a wider movement for social justice. We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance where need is great, tackling the effects of poverty as well as its root causes.

1.2 Christian Aid addresses sexual and gender-based violence in all spheres of our work supporting a range of partners in their efforts to change damaging cultural practices and behaviour, and to ensure women's right to freedom from fear and violence. For example, we support partners to lobby for preventative and protective legislation, and to hold their governments to account for their adherence to international commitments such as the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (in **Myanmar** for example our partners are now using international human rights framework, in the form of CEDAW and UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 & 1820, to lobby government and other actors to advocate for more government action in this area); we work with faith and traditional leaders to change social norms around violence against women and girls (in **Egypt** Christian Aid funds Bless anti-FGM workshops to educate women and girls on the health risks posed by FGM); we support partners in training young men on conflict resolution, sexual health and gender (in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic) as well as training on civilian rights, child protection and sexual violence for army officers (in the DRC)

1.3 Christian Aid is a member of the Gender & Development Network (GADN) and has also worked with DFID to advise on their theory of change for addressing VAWG.

1.4 We welcome the opportunity to provide written evidence to the International Development Committee on violence against women and girls.

2.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Violence against women and girls is a global pandemic around the world. Among women aged between 15 and 44, acts of violence cause more death and disability than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined. Up to seven in ten women experience violence in their lifetime and this persistence of violence against women and girls is a key obstacle to the achievement of gender equality and the realisation of women's rights. Christian Aid therefore regards VAWG as both a cause and symptom of gender inequality and unequal power relations. It limits the opportunities of people to flourish and live decent lives and is therefore an urgent development issue which requires a strong, unequivocal response from governments, including DFID, and from global civil society.

2.2 We welcome DFID's focus on Violence against Women and Girls and would stress the need for a long-term commitment in this area. We hope that there will be a greater focus on the root causes of violence against women and girls, the enabling environment, and on addressing social norms that perpetuate inequality and violence, as set out in DFID's Theory of Change;

2.3 The international community needs to put much greater emphasis on protection and prevention of violence in the context of humanitarian response;

2.4 We welcome the Government's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) and would like to stress the importance of long-term appropriate strategies to strengthen the rule of law;

2.5 On sexual violence in conflict, we would urge DFID and the FCO to stress the impact of gender-based violence on men, as well as women and girls, in their communication;

2.6 Christian Aid would like to see Violence against Women and Girls, addressed in the post-2015 development framework. We believe that the best way of driving forward progress on gender equality, would be for the UK Government to support a stand-alone transformational goal on gender equality as well as ensuring that action on gender is mainstreamed throughout the framework.

3.0 THE EXTENT TO WHICH DFID PROGRAMMES ON VAWG SUPPORT THE RIGHT POLICY INSTRUMENTS AND REFLECT BEST PRACTICE, AS OUTLINED IN DFID'S THEORY OF CHANGE AND RELATED GUIDANCE

3.1 It is important at the outset to distinguish between the widespread violence against women and girls globally, which often goes on behind closed doors and often within the household, the acceptance of harmful practices, and sexual violence in conflict, where the breakdown of law and order can lead to an increase in

VAWG and where rape can be used against both men and women as a weapon of war. Domestic violence is one of the most pervasive human rights abuses globally and tends to intensify during and after conflict. These phenomena are not unrelated, but different strategies may be needed in order to address these injustices.

3.2 DFID's Theory of Change on VAWG helpfully identifies a range of interventions required for tackling VAWG including empowering women & girls, changing social norms, building political will and legal & institutional capacity to prevent and respond, and providing comprehensive services (including specialist services). All of these are essential but not all have been adequately resourced and/or addressed, not only by DFID but by other actors including NGOs and faith groups.

3.3 Whilst Christian Aid welcomes DFID's commitment to addressing VAWG, we believe that DFID's current programming focuses too much on the effects of VAWG rather than the root causes of problem—namely the social norms which perpetuate dominant masculinities and submissive femininities, and an acceptability of inequality between women and men. In many societies both men and women still accept VAWG as 'normal' or even acceptable. As long as these damaging social norms persist within societies, any existing laws, policies and programmes addressing VAWG are unlikely to be applied comprehensively and with a commitment to creating a society in which VAWG is not only undesirable, but unacceptable.

3.4 Addressing these damaging social norms is not always easy, but it can be done. In Christian Aid's work, programmes which have been especially successful in changing damaging social norms have included all or some of the following features:

- Ensuring all international development and humanitarian programmes, regardless of thematic focus, do not inadvertently reinforce existing damaging social norms, by ensuring they are gender sensitive and at the very least 'do no harm'.
- Leadership on alternative social norms and practices by traditional and faith leaders
- Working with both men and women—creating safe spaces for both men and women (and especially youth as part of life-skills education) to discuss social norms
- Emphasising not just the social benefits, but the economic and health benefits of more positive social norms for both women and men
- Harnessing the power of the media to support more positive social norms
- Ensuring that all of the above is supported by (and in turn supports) appropriate laws, policies and services aiming to address VAWG eg by ensuring rights holders and duty bearers are aware of their rights and entitlements, roles and obligations.

3.5 On the subject of sexual violence in conflict more specifically (also discussed below in the context of the PSVI), Christian Aid wants to urge DFID and the FCO to recognise the huge numbers of men who are also victims of sexual violence during conflict. A 2010 survey, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, found that 22% of men and 30% of women in Eastern Congo reported conflict-related sexual violence. Few UN agencies, governments and NGOs acknowledge this. The Refugee Law project, a DFID funded Christian Aid partner, is working to address this issue practically through medical care but is also advocating for the phenomenon to be addressed. The view that women are *the* rape victim and that men are the perpetrators, is the dominant one and thus international human rights law leaves out men in nearly all instruments designed to address sexual violence. The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 treats wartime sexual and gender-based violence as something that only impacts on women and girls and thus whilst there does need to be a specific push around the role of women in peace-building, we would also urge DFID and FCO to consider provision and policies appropriate for male survivors of sexual violence.

4.0 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DFID FUNDING MECHANISMS FOR VAWG AND THE SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO MEASURE THEIR IMPACT

4.1 There is no short-cut, quick-win approach to addressing these damaging social norms that underlie VAWG—in some countries it may take generations—this often does not sit well with current DFID funding cycles. Nevertheless, we believe that helping to create a world in which VAWG is unacceptable is a worthy goal for DFID. Christian Aid would encourage a long-term commitment by DFID to addressing the causes of VAWG.

4.2 Christian Aid welcomes the new research and innovation fund launched by DFID at the end of 2012. It is good to see a strong focus on prevention, including behavioural change, coming through in the terms of reference and we hope that this will lead to bold research that will be able to test the theory of change and in particular explore the effectiveness of different interventions aimed at changing social norms, including work with faith groups, and work with men and boys.

5.0 CO-ORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF DFID'S WORK ON VAWG WITH THE OTHER PRIORITY AREAS OUTLINED IN DFID'S GENDER VISION, AND WITH OTHER AREAS OF DFID PROGRAMMING

5.1 The centrality of gender to DFID's work, as evidenced by the departmental Business Plan and the Strategic Vision for Girls and Women, is encouraging. However as the 'One Year On' assessment of the strategy makes clear, there is a widely recognised evidence gap about 'what works', particularly in improving

the enabling environment, crucial for VAWG but also for the other pillars in the strategic vision. It is therefore good to see that in addition to the new fund, the ‘pipeline programmes’ on enabling environment, will all have a research component.

5.2 There are very clear links to be made with DFID’s efforts to combat HIV and its position paper, “Towards Zero Infections”. In the words of Michel Sidibe, speaking at the launch of ‘We Will Speak Out’ in 2011 (a coalition of like-minded church groups, international aid agencies and Christians committed to end sexual violence), “people forced into sex are automatically denied the means to protect themselves against HIV”⁴⁸.

5.3 Regarding sexual violence in conflict, we would argue for a comprehensive approach, which goes beyond just combating impunity through co-ordination and capacity-building (the focus of the G8 Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative), although we do very much welcome the Government’s leadership in this area. However, the success of the PSVI approach does depend in part on the host Government’s willingness to engage on all levels. In DRC, many of the structures are already in place that are in charge of co-ordination and that focus on comprehensive responses to, and prevention of, sexual violence cases. The main challenge is not necessarily capacity, but often insecurity, inaccessibility and a lack of Government co-operation. This has meant that the deployment of experts in the so-called ‘Rule of Law Prosecution Support Cell’ has been limited in effect due to failing requests of the DRC Government (permission needs to be granted at the highest levels), as well as timely access to areas. This underlines the importance of undertaking a joint assessment, with key actors involved in fighting GBV in country, to map out what exists, what works, what doesn’t work and what would be needed, before any deployment of external experts.

5.4 Moreover there needs to be a focus on long-term appropriate strategies to strengthen rule of law and to ensure accessible, available and gender-responsive justice. The success of the PSVI approach relies on the victim choosing a judicial path and depends on investigations taking place in a timely manner. However, there are of course multiple obstacles that women and girls face when accessing justice which must be recognised and addressed. Legislation and judicial/legal officials must be accessible and trusted by the population, responsive to gender dynamics and the particular needs of women and girls, and a fair and functioning judicial/prison system to guarantee follow-up steps is essential. Short-term responses that do not fit within a longer-term strategy may even bring about unintentional consequences. For instance, the failure of the DRC Government and the international community to work on judicial reform and the judicial apparatus meant that many countries (although not the UK) resorted to supporting mobile courts. Short term justice progress, however, came along with magistrates that were paid high per diems to take part in mobile courts and that subsequently refused to work in fixed courts (as they would not benefit from additional financial means).

6.0 THE EXTENT TO WHICH DFID’S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES ADDRESS VAWG

6.1 In the context of humanitarian crisis, the need to address VAWG is considered a life-saving activity when responding to immediate needs. Whilst some countries, most notably DRC, have received attention due to the high incidence of rape and sexual violence, the prioritisation of VAWG in humanitarian response is still fairly rare. The DARA Humanitarian Response Index for 2011 found that gender considerations in emergencies are often seen as add-ons and while many donors may have gender policies in place, these are rarely monitored⁴⁹. In DRC for example, whilst there has been a major focus on medical and psychosocial assistance, prevention and protection activities have often been left out or received considerably less attention. In humanitarian settings (IDP camps for example), there is a need for protection activities to be reinforced (and linked to preventing VAWG activities) and it is encouraging therefore the read about DFID’s work on this area in Pakistan⁵⁰. For those responding to humanitarian crises, it is of course essential that the highest possible standards are upheld but it is worth noting that in Haiti, where there was a context of natural disaster rather than conflict, the operational UN response has been repeatedly subject to accusations of widespread sex abuse, with large numbers of peacekeepers suspended from duty and charged by authorities.⁵¹

6.2 In DRC, Christian Aid’s humanitarian response has also involved measures to address the social and cultural barriers which deter women from speaking out and community leaders and their wider communities from supporting them. Education measures engaging a range of local actors are important to tackling the culture of impunity.

7.0 STRENGTH OF UK LEADERSHIP ROLE INTERNATIONALLY ON VAWG, INCLUDING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DFID’S WORK WITH MULTILATERAL PARTNERS AND THE UK’S INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION FOR VAWG POSITION

7.1 2013 offers a number of important opportunities for international leadership on the issue of VAWG and the UK is to be congratulated for putting sexual violence in conflict firmly on the G8 agenda, during its Presidency year. This year’s Commission on the Status of Women also offers a crucial opportunity to address VAWG in all its forms. We have already seen global outrage at the horrific rape and subsequent death of an Indian woman in Delhi—we now need to see leaders speaking up about VAWG around the world, sending out

⁴⁸ <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/whatwedo/in-focus/gender/committing-to-fight-sexual-violence.aspx>

⁴⁹ <http://daraint.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/HRI2011execsummary.pdf>

⁵⁰ <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/stories/case-studies/2010/gender-violence-in-pakistan/>

⁵¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/7075866.stm

a strong message of zero tolerance and implementing existing commitments, including their obligations under the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

7.2 The UK Government National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace & Security, is another laudable initiative. However, in reality, we are all too aware of the challenge and in the last 25 years, only 1 in 40 peace signatories have been women. 10 years on from 1325, 16 peace processes have been undertaken, 5 of which involved no women at all⁵².

7.3 This year's Commission on the Status of Women will be discussing the issue of VAWG as well as the post-2015 agenda (see below). The CSW is a significant moment for governments and civil society to come together and this year, there is potential for a set of global standards to be agreed, or a 'convention' on violence against women and girls. The failure to agree conclusions at the 56th Session of the CSW was very concerning and there is pressure therefore, for world leaders to ensure a successful outcome this year. We hope that the UK Government will do all it can to build a strong coalition of the willing going into CSW, and continue to work with UN Women, the UN Secretary-General, NGOs and broader civil society to create momentum for change.

7.4 The position of 'International Champion on VAWG', currently held by Lynne Featherstone, now DFID Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State is a very important role which we very much hope to see retained (by a Minister) in the future. We also welcome the cross-government strategy (led by the Home Office), for tackling violence against women and girls.

8.0 VAWG AND THE POST-2015 AGENDA

8.1 Christian Aid is actively engaging in the post-2015 development process and would like to see a future development framework which seeks to reduce inequality in all its forms. The gains that have been made on gender equality must not be lost and therefore we would argue that a stand-alone gender goal should be retained in order to inspire action and secure the high-level political support needed for progress on gender equality. The rationale for both a stand-alone goal and the mainstreaming of gender across a new framework is set out in the GADN briefing paper, *Gender Equality and the Post-2015 Framework*⁵³.

8.2 A stand-alone goal allows for the possibility of a fuller-range of targets, building on MDG 3 and its target on gender parity in education, but bringing in a wider range of issues to achieve a truly transformational goal. A target to reduce VAWG, an injustice that was referenced in the Millennium Declaration itself, could be a very useful policy instrument, and would send out an important message that VAWG is not only intolerable from a human rights perspective, but is also a core development issue.

8.3 There may also be other goals within a new framework which are highly relevant. Whilst it is too early to say whether there will be additional goals on areas such as conflict, peace-building and governance, debates are on-going and include discussions about personal security, access to justice and VAWG. The Peace-building & State-building Goals (PSGs) which have been established under the New Deal for Fragile States may feed into the post-2015 process and a number of indicators have already been proposed (subject to consultation). These include the incidence of rape and sexual violence under the Security Goal (with an awareness that incident reporting may go up initially), and the percentage of people who feel they have affordable access to the justice system under the Justice Goal (disaggregated by gender)⁵⁴.

8.4 Finally, it goes without saying that if we take DFID's Theory of Change seriously, then we should also seek to see progress in tackling VAWG as a result of other gains in gender equality. For example, an increase in the number of women in political leadership (another possible target under a post-2015 Gender Equality goal), should lead to positive social and cultural change, a pre-requisite for reducing the numbers of women and girls affected by violence. Christian Aid welcomes the Secretary of State's commitment to ensuring that gender is at the heart of the post-2015 agenda⁵⁵, and we hope that the UK Prime Minister, in his High-Level Panel role, as well as the Secretary of State, will champion a truly transformational and comprehensive goal on gender equality throughout the post-2015 negotiations.

January 2013

⁵² <http://www.nowomennopeace.org/the-issue>

⁵³ <http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk/storage/GADN%20Briefing%203%20-%20Gender%20equality%20and%20the%20post-2015%20framework.pdf>

⁵⁴ <http://www.newdeal4peace.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/progress-report-on-fa-and-indicators-en.pdf>

⁵⁵ <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/News/Speeches-and-statements/2012/Justine-Greening-Gender-in-the-post-2015-agenda/>

**Written evidence submitted by Alemsehaye Gebrekidan, Chair
The Former Child Wives' Foundation UK**

A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF ETHIOPIAN FORMER CHILD WIFE IN THE UK

SUMMARY

- I am Ethiopian-born former child wife, who was married at ten, became a mother at 13, a single mother and widow at 13 and half when my husband was killed in the civil war. My traumatic experiences led me to form a charity, The Former Child Wives' Foundation.
- The Foundation works to raise public awareness of the stigma as well as the profound social, economic and health problems associated with child marriage. We also encourage other former child wives who are living in isolation to come out and seek help; and we provide advice regarding the available support services.
- The Ethiopian Former Child Wives' Foundation UK appreciates the tremendous work, which this Committee and UK government have done to tackle Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and Early Marriage in the UK and in the developing countries.
- However, we regret that very little is known or said about the unfortunate women who had been married when they were children. Yet the effects of child marriage on individuals and society are just as, or even more damaging and long-lasting than Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation.
- According the tradition in my native Ethiopia, it was believed that a girl was too old to be married after the age of 14 or 15. But the main reason was poverty. Child marriage was supposed to relieve pressure on the poor family and guarantee the future economic wellbeing of the child wife, especially if she was married into wealthy family with plenty of land, cows, goats, sheep and donkeys.
- In other words, a girl's value was measured in terms of the age at which she got married and the family in which she was married, but not her values as an individual or education achievements.
- Although the Ethiopian government banned the marriage of girls under the age of 18 in 2001, that law came too late for me and millions of other children who had been before that date.
- Some of these "valuable" former child wives fled to the UK during the civil war between 1974 and 1991 and after. Others stayed behind.

THE IMPACTS OF CHILD MARRIAGE

Whether a former child stayed in Ethiopia or moved to the UK, the impacts of child marriage remains with her. She was robbed of her childhood, prevented from getting basic education and she is likely to have suffered fistula. She is also expected to have as many children as nature allows.

But it is the lack of basic educations, which causes the greatest long-term damage to the former child wife, her children they society in which they live. Unable to read or write, she is socially blind, economically crippled and forced to depend on her husband to direct her life, however violent and abusive he is.

I was in Ethiopia last March, when I met several former child wives who were living with their children in the streets. Some of them told me that they had fled from abusive husbands. Others said they had been widowed. Still others said they had been abandoned by their husbands who had gone to look for work in Libya and other Arab countries never to return.

But all of these former child wives told me that they had been forced to become prostitutes in order to earn some money to feed their children.

They also told me that they were facing violence and risking HIV on a daily basis. They were fearful for their children who were likely get involved in crimes, become prostitutes or get married early and create the next generation of former child wives.

THE FORMER CHILD WIVES IN LONDON

The number of the former child wives in London and around the UK is unknown. Because of stigma, many of them are living in isolation and suffering in silence. Their English is too poor to express their concerns or basic support needs. They are facing difficulties with parenting. And they are trapped in a vicious cycle of unemployment, benefit dependency, poverty and ill-health.

It is these former child wives and their children, now British citizens of permanent residents, who will be most affected by benefit changes due in early April.

THE FUTURE

The Former child Wives' Foundation has a plan to encourage other former child wives to come out, speak about their experiences and take advantage of government support services in order to improve their lives.

We also have a plan to start a pilot project in form of a hostel to house the former child wives living in the streets in Addis Ababa, Makele and other big towns. We want to support them to go back to school, start trading in the market or learn basic skills, which would lead to self-employment and independence.

RESILIENT WOMEN

Having been forced to grow up fast when they were married as children, the former child wives are some of the most resilient people you can find. They were already wives, juggling with child care, looking for food and cooking for their husbands when their British counterparts were playing with dolls or computer games. They have the determination to make the best of what is left of their lives.

For example, I came to the UK when I could not speak or understand a word in English. I learnt my first ABC from the UK. I went to college and got a diploma in Business studies. There are several other former child wives who are doing various things to improve their lives.

CONCLUSION

As our personal experiences have shown, child marriage affects not only the individual and her children, but also the community in which they live. Without a timely and effective intervention, the effects of child marriage (poor education, unemployment, poverty and ill-health) are likely to be multiplied and carried forward to the next generations.

CALL FOR ACTION

The Former Child Wives' Foundation calls on the International Development Committee to consider the victims of child marriage with the same urgency which they have given to the Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation. They need the practical support to stand up on their two feet. We are willing and ready to play our part in collaboration with other government and voluntary agencies. Our achievements testify to what we can do.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

Although we lack even the most basic resources, rely on volunteers and operate from my small flat in Ealing, we have managed to lobby several MPs who signed Parliamentary Motion No 1105 on child marriage in Ethiopia; delivered a petition to No 10 Downing Street; been to the Foreign Office for a meeting with officials in the Forced Marriage department; become a member of the "Girls not Brides Campaign" headed by the international elders including Archbishop Tutu; and we have secured the moral support of the Ethiopian women gold medalists in the 2012 Olympics, namely Tiki Gelana (Marathon), Turinesh Debaba (10,000m) and Mesret Defar (5,000m).

All we need are your political support and resources.

14 March 2013

Written evidence submitted by FORWARD

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. FORWARD is a dynamic go to African Diaspora women's organisation with a big agenda to safeguard the dignity, health and human rights of African women and girls. We respond to gender based discriminatory practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage and related health disabilities such as obstetric fistula. Our philosophy for making social change happen is based on a process of collective action, personal empowerment and agency. FORWARD vision is that women and girls live in dignity, are healthy and have choices and equal opportunities. We prioritise the needs of girls and young women especially the vulnerable, marginalised and those who live in resource poor settings.

1.2. FORWARD welcomes the new IDC Inquiry on Violence against women and girls and the UK Department of International Development (DFID)'s renewed focus on VAWG. The opportunity for civil society organizations working on VAWG to input into this inquiry process is very much appreciated.

1.3. Naana Otoo-Oyortey Executive Director of FORWARD has worked for the last 20 years in the field of sexual and reproductive health rights and women's issues as an advocate, trainer and speaker. Naana has played an instrumental role in lobbying for global action to end child marriage and FGM and the rights of African girls and young women.

2. SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. We recommend that the UK strengthen its national FGM strategy in order to demonstrate consistency at international level through the adoption of a comprehensive national action plan which build bridges with countries of origin and safeguards all children at risk globally.

2.2. We propose that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and DFID work alongside European and African governments to develop programmes to support multiple forms of VAWG including child marriage, FGM and honour forms of violence and tackle prevention and support programmes aimed at reducing the triple burden that faces girls in many communities.

2.3. FORWARD recommends DFID continue to invest in and acknowledge the added value of working at grassroots level. We also recommend DFID develop programmes to strengthen civil society Organisation' at grass roots level—in particular young women's lead organizations, to enable them to build their capacity in programming and advocacy. This should include facilitating in-country learning, monitoring and evaluations and sharing of work on VAWG.

2.4. This submission calls for DFID to identify innovative ways to engage diaspora communities and civil society organizations in the UK to strengthen their capacity and build on their expertise in tackling particularly cultural forms of VAWG issues in the UK and in their countries of origin.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) has in the past ten years come up on the global development agenda including DFID's new international development agenda. VAWG is a global human rights violation that affects the lives of millions of girls and women. However, this extreme form of gender discrimination and inequality manifests in different realities in different cultures and settings.

3.2. VAWG encompasses physical, sexual and emotional forms and manifests at every level of society. Some forms of violence such as female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage and honour based violence are often perpetrated in the name of culture, tradition or religion. A number of women and girls are at risk of, or experiencing these manifestations of VAWG alongside domestic and sexual violence. These contexts present different challenges, which need to be taken into consideration in the UK's development response to VAWG.

3.3. The UK government—namely DFID and the FCO—has taken some notable steps to situate VAWG within its foreign policy agenda. Nonetheless, there are some important gaps which the Government can address to ensure a more comprehensive and effective approach.

4. THE CONTEXT OF VAWG IN THE UK

4.1 The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office has taken a lead role globally on work on forced marriage including the creation of a dedicated Forced Marriage Unit and policy direction; operating both in the UK and internationally. There are a number of valuable lessons to share both at the European level and at the international level.

4.2 In 2012 the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health organized a parliamentary Hearing on child marriage which heard expert witnesses and written submission on child marriage. The recommendations from the event offer valuable guidance for DFID, and the national Government, which should be incorporated into DFID's VAWG work.

4.3 In 2011, followed by an update in 2012, the Home Office published the VAWG Strategy and Action Plan (The Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls)⁵⁶ which includes government commitments for VAWG issues on an international level. This strategy also acknowledges the importance of collaborative work between the UK and other nations, and acknowledges the presence of cultural forms of violence which have deep roots in countries of origin.

4.4 DFID's inclusion of VAWG as one of the four pillars for action in DFID's strategic Vision for Girls and Women as well as the appointment of a Ministerial Champion for VAWG Overseas highlights the valuable role of coordination and integration as central elements of the VAWG approach.

4.5 In a national context, the Home Office's "Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan: Next Chapter" includes four FGM related action points. Yet, despite this inclusion these action points lack any clear policy commitments. Of particular relevance to this inquiry, the lack of any defined commitments between the FCO, Home Office and UK Border Agency is especially concerning. FGM is a migration, asylum and human rights issue, which affects many women immigrating to the UK from Africa. It is worth noting that two sites of current geo political unrest—Mali and Egypt have FGM prevalence rates as high as 90% 92% respectively.⁵⁷

4.6 Other developments nationally include the UK Government signing the Council of Europe's Declaration against VAWG (Istanbul Convention), which provides a comprehensive framework based on prevention, provision, prosecution and protection. Ratification of the Convention will further strengthen the UK's VAWG related policy framework, and will be a significant symbol internationally of the UK's commitment to ending VAWG at home, and abroad.

⁵⁶ Home Office, Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls, 2012 can be accessed here: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/call-end-violence-women-girls/action-plan-new-chapter?view=Binary>

⁵⁷ UNFPA, FGM: A Statistical Study, 2005, can be accessed at the following address: http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/FGM-C_final_10_October.pdf

4.7 In the area of FGM, the UK government has had a law in place since 2003. We are now in the 10th anniversary of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. The act, which replaced the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985, clearly states that the need to protect UK citizens and permanent residents from being taken abroad for the purpose of FGM. However there is no integrated approach to enforcing the law and key statutory agencies don't have a statutory obligation in relation to safeguarding children from FGM.

4.8 Additionally the Act does not currently provide explicit protection for temporary residents, or those seeking Asylum. Considering the fact that DFID has been a key contributor to the International donor working group on FGM, and held a meeting in London in December 2012 to share global developments in tackling FGM, it is critical that our domestic laws offer the widest protection possible, in order to demonstrate consistency on the international level.

4.9 DFID has also provided funding for Diaspora organisations through the Common Ground Initiative led by Comic Relief. The initiative provides valuable development funding for Diaspora organisations to strengthen their capacity in the programme areas of VAWG, health and education. However, many Diaspora organisations are too small and lack the capacity to fully access this funding stream and will need innovative small grants scheme to ensure that communities who need to access these funds can be supported to access them.

5. LESSONS FROM FORWARD'S WORK ON VAWG

"I had the interest to continue my education. I miss the school. I feel sorry very much as I failed to continue my education. I couldn't be successful both in marriage and education. I thought that life would have been easier if get married. But the fact is not like that.

The reason I dropped out of the school is I get married at early age. I didn't know when I got pregnant. Then I stop going school afraid of others. I wanted to continue my education. Then I give birth. Even after I give birth I had the plan to go back to school but my husband and the villager told me to stay at home to administer my home"

Most people now agree they want to avoid early marriage but still the problem happens with priests and some boys want to get married with young girls. It is difficult for the Government to intervene with the priests as the religion is so much respected here but it is very important. (FORWARD 2012: No Girl should be a Bride; PEER Study in Ethiopia)

5.1. Child marriage has in the last ten years started to appear on the global development agenda. Annually Child Marriage affects 10 million girls worldwide according to data from UNFPA.⁵⁸ DFID has acknowledged the need to tackle child marriage and early pregnancy in its Four Pillars. However, the focus has been on prevention and delaying first pregnancy. This fails to address the millions of girls already living as child mothers, child brides or child widows. A participatory study conducted by FORWARD in 2012 revealed that development interventions on child marriage continue to focus on girls in schools.

5.2. FORWARD has found that Diaspora communities play an increasing role in effective development work. The temporary or permanent settlement of FGM affected communities in the UK, mean that **DFID and the FCO must work together with the Home Office—and on a Pan European basis—to share best practice and strategies for eliminating FGM both nationally, and on an international basis.**

5.3. **FORWARD also recommends that both DFID and FCO tap into the existing Diaspora networks and local country expertise to build upon on-going development interventions by Diaspora women.**

5.4. FORWARD's programme in Tanzania has shown that even in the case of national legislation criminalising forms of VAWG such as FGM and Child Marriage, the practices may still be prevalent. Thus, **FORWARD recommends that DFID adopts a stronger child protection framework as part of its development approach in tackling VAWG in particular cultural forms of VAWG.** The predominant focus on social norms approach to FGM ignores the role of government obligations to protect the rights of vulnerable girls and young women

5.5. DFID's commitments to work to: "delay first [births] and support safe childbirth"; ensure girls have access to secondary school; and prevent violence; are welcome points of focus. FORWARD's programme work and research in Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Ethiopia has discovered a direct link between child marriage, child motherhood and girls being at risk of sexual and domestic violence. This triple burden on girls is often not recognised in development interventions which focus on sole forms of VAWG. Thus, efforts to provide a more comprehensive approach are crucial.

5.6. In addition to this, FORWARD's work in Africa has also evidenced that there is work to be done with local and national governments in African countries that have a sizeable prevalence of child mothers, and child widows to enable these girls to return to education, access adequate health and social care, and gain economic independence. All these factors are essential in delaying second and third pregnancies as well as reducing the risk of sustained domestic and sexual violence.

⁵⁸ UNFPA, 2012 Marrying Too Young

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DFID

6.1. FORWARD recommends DFID alongside the FCO and MoD adopt a comprehensive cross departmental VAWG strategy, which takes account of all forms of VAWG including FGM, child marriage; and also acknowledges the triple burden that some girls and women face as a result of these cultural forms of violence.

6.2. FORWARD recommends that DFID conduct research and commit resources to supporting child mothers and child widows into education, thus enhancing the possibility of economic freedom and helping to reduce the risk of sustained domestic and sexual violence.

6.3. FORWARD recommends DFID develop programme strategies that focus on preventing VAWG and support services for those affected including access to psychosocial support for married girls and young women and their children.

6.4. FORWARD recommends DFID continue to invest in and acknowledge the added value of working at grassroots level. We also recommend DFID develop programmes to strengthen civil society Organisation' at grass roots level—in particular young women's lead organisations, to enable them to build their capacity in programming and advocacy. This should include facilitating in-country learning, monitoring and evaluations and sharing of work on VAWG.

6.5. FORWARD recommends that the UK Government ratify the Istanbul Convention, and thus strengthen the UK VAWG policy framework.

February 2013

Written evidence submitted by the Gender and Development Network (GADN)

1. The Gender and Development Network (GADN) is a diverse, effective and inclusive membership network made up of leading UK-based non-governmental organisations' (NGO) staff, practitioners, consultants and academics working on gender, development and women's rights issues. GADN enables members to share information and expertise, lobby government and international bodies on gender and development issues, and provide expert advice and comment on policies and projects. Our members work in partnership with development and advocacy organisations throughout the world.

2. The GADN violence against women and girls working group has welcomed DFID's commitment to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) and the significant progress that has been made. We now wish to highlight five key recommendations that will contribute to consolidating the gains made and strengthening the UK's leadership on VAWG at a critical time. We will focus the body of our submission on three broad areas where action is needed:

- (a) translating commitments into practice;
- (b) driving international action to eliminate VAWG; and
- (c) ensuring successful outcomes from the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

3. DFID should:

- (a) Pursue a coherent and coordinated cross-government approach to addressing VAWG internationally—including all development, conflict, security and humanitarian agendas—by revising the international section of the cross-government strategy on VAWG and adding a framework for monitoring impacts, to align it with DFID's new Theory of Change for Tackling VAWG and related guidance.
- (b) Ensure the Ministerial Champion on VAWG Overseas has the access, authority and resources to drive this strategy forward across Government, especially across the FCO, DFID and MoD, and reports annually to parliament on progress.
- (c) Work to ensure CSW57 on VAWG has strong agreed conclusions that protect existing agreed human rights commitments, are focused on prevention and access to comprehensive services, and set a progressive, action-oriented agenda for the longer-term, including through the recommendation of a specific target on ending VAWG as part of a dedicated standalone goal on gender equality within the post-2015 framework.
- (d) Work to ensure the post-2015 framework includes a specific target on ending VAWG within a dedicated standalone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- (e) Recognise the catalytic role women's rights organisations play in tackling VAWG and embed a commitment to actively support women's rights organisations across VAWG policy, programming and funding, including by: providing additional, dedicated funding to women's rights organisations working on VAWG; increasing devolved funding for VAWG through women's funds that have strong partnerships with southern women's rights organisations; and ensuring at least 15% of all UK conflict peace-building funds, in line with UN targets, are spent on addressing women's specific needs and advancing gender equality or empowering women,

including by directly financing women's rights organisations. More broadly, more effective systems are needed for tracking how much money is spent on women's rights, and who receives this funding, including through tracking all aid using the DAC gender equality marker.

INTRODUCTION

4. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is one of the most systematic, pervasive abuses of human rights, directly affecting one in three women globallyⁱ and indirectly affecting all women. It persists in every country of the world in both public and private spheres, and is perpetrated both in conflict situations and in "peaceful" societies.ⁱⁱ Many women experience violence regularly throughout their lives and much of this violence is committed with impunity.ⁱⁱⁱ VAWG is both an extreme manifestation of gender inequality and a means of perpetuating it, acting as a mechanism of social control which reinforces the subordinate status of women and girls, their economic dependence on men, and their lack of power.^{iv} VAWG also prevents women from claiming their rights and from contributing to and benefiting from development by restricting their choices and limiting their ability to access education, earn an income and participate in political and public life".^v It therefore poses a fundamental barrier to equality, peace and sustainable growth.^{vi}

5. The UK's role internationally is such that it can and does have tangible impact on the rights of women and girls outside its territory. Through its foreign policy, including its diplomatic, defence and development work, the UK has been able to tackle VAWG internationally and help ensure all women and girls live free from gender-based violence.

PROGRESS MADE (SINCE 2008)

6. UK civil society has welcomed the positive show of commitment by the UK Government to tackling VAWG internationally. This has been demonstrated through the appointment of Lynne Featherstone MP as the UK's Ministerial Champion for VAWG Overseas, and by a number of new policy and funding commitments made across the UK's international departments to tackle VAWG including:

- the Cross-Government VAWG Strategy and Action Plan, which includes an international section that sets out concrete actions to tackle VAWG internationally;
- an explicit commitment in DFID's Business Plan 2011–15 to approve new programmes to prevent VAWG, and the inclusion of VAWG as one of four pillars for action in DFID's Strategic Vision for Girls and Women (2011);
- the 2012 revision of the UK National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which includes three country-specific action plans and specifically looks at gender and sexual based violence; and
- the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative.

7. In addition to these government strategies, there have also been positive signs that the UK's approach to tackling VAWG internationally is becoming more comprehensive. For example, DFID recently commissioned GADN to produce a theory of change on tackling VAWG,^{vii} which includes important commitments to supporting women's rights organisations and women human rights defenders, managing backlash, supporting community-level prevention and response mechanisms, and changing social norms.

AREAS FOR ACTION

Translating commitments into practice

8. For these positive commitments to translate into real differences in women's lives, challenges to effective implementation of new policy commitments must be addressed. In particular, there are concerns about adequate resourcing and cross-government policy coherence.^{viii} As international VAWG cuts across so many different areas of work, strategies and departments, and as ActionAid's submission to this inquiry highlights, **it is vital that there is oversight of all of these processes and steps to ensure that the range of strategies and policies across government are coherent and mutually reinforcing.**

9. Within DFID, while the portfolio of work on VAWG is ambitious, it is currently siloed rather than being integrated systematically across the work of the organisation. GADN members have emphasised the **need for a stronger focus on addressing violence against women and girls as a core issue across all of DFID's programming;** in particular, in the areas of water and sanitation, education, health and emergency response.

10. For example, Wateraid have highlighted the link between lack of access to water and sanitation (WASH) facilities and sexual violence against women and girls.^{ix} Women and girls who have no choice but to collect water from remote sources are at much greater risk of sexual harassment and attack. Likewise, women who lack access to safe sanitation facilities may end up waiting until it is dark to go to the toilet, have to walk long distances to find an isolated spot in the open, or use public amenities, exposing them to increased risk of sexual harassment and violence. Despite extensive research and documentation, the link between WASH and violence against women and girls is often overlooked.

11. GADN therefore recommends that DFID recognise VAWG as a central issue within the context of WASH programming, including within emergency response, and take steps to prevent such violence from

occurring; for example, through ensuring that women are directly involved in the planning and management of water supply and sanitation programmes; that hygiene promotion interventions are specifically designed to reach women and girls and respond to their priorities; and that consultation and collaboration with women and women's groups in affected communities is made an explicit part of programme design and implementation.

12. Likewise, Plan International's report *A Girls Right to Learn Without Fear: Working to end gender based violence at school*,^x draws attention to the widespread problem of violence against girls in schools and the need for stronger leadership on this issue from governments and donors. While DFID recognises violence in schools as a key barrier to girls accessing education,^{xi} integration of violence against girls within DFID's portfolio of work on education needs to be strengthened.

13. DFID's humanitarian work similarly can be strengthened so that it is better able to tackle VAWG as a life-saving response in emergencies right at the start of interventions. As Christian Aid emphasise in their submission to this Inquiry, the prioritisation of VAWG in humanitarian response is still rare, as shown by the DARA Humanitarian Response Index for 2011 which finds that gender considerations in emergencies are often seen as add-ons.^{xii} IRC's experience on the ground in Syria, for example, demonstrates that VAWG is a key feature of the emergency, as with other emergencies. IRC's research, published just two weeks ago, reveals that Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan—both men and women—confirmed that sexual violence against women was the main reason they fled the country.^{xiii}

14. DFID staff across the board should be expected to ensure that their work contributes to tackling VAWG. As Womankind proposes in their submission to the Inquiry, one strategy for ensuring that VAWG is included as a core consideration across all DFID-funded programmes is through requiring that all funding proposals demonstrate how they will address and mitigate the potential risks of VAWG in their programme design, implementation and monitoring—not only programmes where VAWG is a primary objective.

15. The Government should:

- (a) strengthen policy coherence across the international departments, including by (a) revising the international section of the cross-govt VAWG strategy to align it with DFID's new Theory of Change on VAWG and (b) ensuring the Champion for Violence against Women and Girls Overseas has the resources and authority needed to push for coordination and coherence across all the international departments (DFID, FCO, MoD);
- (b) improve understanding of VAWG as a mainstream security concern that should be a central plank and a core objective of all UK foreign policy. VAWG must be recognised as both a cause and consequence of conflict, and as a priority issue to tackle when conflict occurs. At the highest level, a member of the National Security Council should have explicit responsibility for women, peace and security to ensure gender perspectives are taken into account in all discussions;
- (c) recognise that since VAWG internationally is a relatively new area of work for the UK Government, there is currently insufficient specialist expertise among staff to operationalise policy commitments on VAWG. Investment is needed in building the capacity of staff in international departments to engage in policy dialogue or develop programmes on VAWG. *All* staff should have the skills and knowledge needed to address VAWG as a core issue within their own areas of work;
- (d) ensure that policy commitments and action plans, such the National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, have clearly allocated funding to enable effective operationalisation of commitments;^{xiv}
- (e) ensure that targeted strategies addressing women's rights and international VAWG are not siloed, but are integrated into all of the UK's international and foreign policy agendas, including on health and education for example, as well as within other government strategies and reviews (such as the Building Stability Overseas Strategy,^{xv} JACS and the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review;^{xvi}
- (f) ensure that VAWG is included as a core consideration across all DFID-funded programmes through a requirement that all funding proposals demonstrate how they will address and mitigate the potential risks of VAWG in their programme design, implementation and monitoring—not only programmes where VAWG is a primary objective;
- (g) ensure that approaches are holistic, working across sectors and with a variety of relevant actors, including faith groups, women's rights organisations, and local leaders;
- (h) ensure that current gaps in evidence do not limit the Government's ambition by restricting funding only to those forms of violence where evidence is more readily available. Developing and monitoring the success of programmes to confront forms of violence that have received less attention should be a priority, such as psychological violence, economic violence, violence and sexual harassment in public places, gender-based political violence and femicide; and
- (i) increase support to women's rights organisations that have specialist expertise in VAWG, a strong understanding of the local context and the capacity to mobilise communities against VAWG.^{xvii} The UK should follow the lead of other donors that have explored new and innovative channels to reach women's organisations working on VAWG, such as channeling

money through women's funds, or establishing special funds and dedicated budget lines.^{xviii} As a first step, the OECD DAC gender equality marker should be applied to all aid in order to track spends on women's rights. See Womankind's Submission for more detail on this recommendation.

Driving international action to eliminate VAWG

16. The UK continues to be a powerful development champion internationally, with the authority and influence to raise the profile of VAWG with governments overseas and in international spaces. The UK should be more proactive in building support for the issue internationally and promoting an understanding of VAWG as a key human rights, development, foreign policy and security issue.

17. We have welcomed the priority that DFID has placed on working in partnership with other governments to ensure the 57th Commission on the Status of Women has strong agreed conclusions that protect existing agreed human rights commitments. We hope this commitment will be sustained beyond the CSW meeting, including through efforts to **promote the inclusion of a specific target on ending violence against women and girls as part of a dedicated standalone goal on gender equality within the post-2015 framework.**

18. This position has been reiterated by leading academics, such as Naila Kabeer from SOAS, who has argued for making zero tolerance on violence against women a central platform in post-MDG agenda.^{xix} It also reflects the priorities of women's rights organisations globally; for example, VAWG was identified as the top priority issue in a survey of 1,119 women's organisations from over 140 countries.^{xx}

19. The Government should:

- (a) take a leadership role in the UK and in international fora to ensure that VAWG stays on the international agenda moving forward;
- (b) use the opportunity of chairing the international working group on establishing a new set of Millennium Development Goals after 2015 to raise the issue of VAWG and push for the inclusion of a specific target on ending violence against women and girls as part of a dedicated standalone goal on gender equality within the post-2015 framework;
- (c) be more vocal in condemning large scale VAWG overseas and pushing for stronger action to protect women and girls and respond adequately to VAWG in humanitarian interventions, including by providing comprehensive services to survivors of violence right at the start of emergency responses;
- (d) recognise and support the work of women human rights defenders who are on the frontlines of producing change in their communities at great personal risk by championing their concerns, facilitating their participation in international meetings that make decisions about their countries and making their protection a priority in foreign policy agendas; and
- (e) continue to invest in efforts to build up the evidence base around preventing VAWG, recognising that social change is complex, takes time, and is not easy to measure or quantify, and specifically supporting women's rights organisations to share lessons about what works and to take effective approaches to scale.

Ensuring successful outcomes from the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative

20. GADN members have welcomed the Foreign Secretary's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) as a critical opportunity to put this issue on the agenda of the G8 and call for global action. However, the network has expressed concern about the narrow focus on increasing investigations and prosecutions, and has pushed for a broader agenda focused on comprehensive efforts to ensure adequate protection and support for survivors of sexual as well as other forms of gender-based violence, combined with efforts to prevent such violence from occurring in the first place.

21. For example, as Christian Aid note in their submission to this Inquiry, the success of the PSVI relies on investigations and prosecutions taking place, but this overlooks the multiple obstacles that women and girls face in accessing justice (such as social norms unsympathetic to their claims and a lack of support from their families and community in seeking justice). Members have also stressed the need for efforts to tackle sexual and other forms of violence in all contexts—conflict, post-conflict and so-called 'peaceful' societies.

22. It is **critical that DFID uses the opportunity of increased political will to tackle VAWG to advance a broad, comprehensive, long-term agenda**—drawing on their programming expertise in this area and their *Theory of Change for Tackling Violence Against Women* and related guidance. In particular, **DFID should work with the FCO to establish better in-country coordination between DFID programming and actions undertaken as part of the PSVI, including linking investigative efforts to existing DFID-funded programmes that protect and support survivors of VAWG.** Below we highlight three areas that GADN members have prioritised in relation to the PSVI agenda, and which should be a core aspect of all of DFID's work on VAWG. These echo many of the points made by members of the Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) Network in their submissions to this Inquiry.

23. Provision of comprehensive services

- (a) While recognising the need to build institutional capacities to investigate and prosecute, members have emphasised the difficulties that women survivors of violence face in sustaining participation in investigations and judicial processes without accompanying health, livelihoods, legal and psycho-social support, and protection from further violence and reprisals. As a result, cases are often dropped as they progress through the system, with only a fraction of cases ending in conviction because these basic conditions are not met.^{xxi} Members also emphasise the critical importance of service provision for survivors of violence as a basic right. Yet, as Restored argue in their submission, despite the great need for specialist services, such services are frequently under-valued, under-resourced, and in some cases, non-existent.
- (b) GADN members have therefore emphasised the importance of using the G8 process to **increase funding to address gaps in frontline, comprehensive services for survivors of sexual violence** as part of wider post conflict reconstruction efforts. These services are a precondition for tackling impunity, as well as being critical in saving lives and preventing survivors from experiencing further violence.

24. Taking a survivor-centred approach

- (a) GADN Members have also raised concerns about the threat of backlash against and targeting of survivors of sexual violence who seek redress, and have emphasised the **importance of ensuring the safety of survivors as part of any efforts to prevent violence against women and tackle impunity**. This is a key principle of DFID's *Theory of Change on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls* and the related *Guidance on Community Programming*. The latter outlines measures to reduce the risk of violence and respond to violence if it occurs, which should be systematically adopted during the design and implementation of all DFID-funded programmes on VAWG. In particular, all interventions should take a survivor-centred approach, based on respect for women's confidentiality and decisions in regards to incidents of violence—including in cases where women decide not to pursue a case against the perpetrator(s) or choose not to be involved in the case. Services should be provided to all survivors of VAWG—regardless of their desire to pursue prosecution ie services should not be an incentive for prosecution.

25. Supporting women's human rights defenders

- (a) GADN members have also pushed for a stronger focus on ensuring the safety and capacity of women human rights defenders in the context of combating sexual and other forms of violence against women and girls. WHRDs are essential front line actors in efforts to prevent and seek justice for sexual violence, and are often targeted because of their work. The UK should champion implementation of the EU Human Rights Defenders Guidelines, and commit to increased funding of the work of women peacebuilders and human rights defenders.
- (b) In particular, we support calls by Womankind Worldwide and ActionAid that the UK ensures that a minimum of 15% of all funds in support of peacebuilding are dedicated to activities that address women's specific needs, advance gender equality and empower women as their primary objective, in line with targets recommended by the UN . This must include earmarked funding for women's rights organisations and women's funds providing rapid response grant making to women's human rights defenders in volatile environments. This would mean ensuring 15% of the conflict pool—which is co-managed by DFID, the FCO and the MOD—is ring-fenced for women's rights.

26. The Government should:

- (a) ensure strong in-country coordination between DFID programming and FCO-led initiatives undertaken as part of the PSVI, including linking investigative efforts to existing DFID-funded programmes that protect and support survivors of VAWG
- (b) use the G8 process to increase funding to address gaps in frontline, comprehensive services for survivors of sexual violence as part of wider post conflict reconstruction efforts
- (c) champion implementation of the EU Human Rights Defenders Guidelines and commit to increased funding of the work of women peacebuilders and human rights defenders
- (d) ensure that a minimum of 15% of all funds in support of peacebuilding are dedicated to activities that address women's specific needs, advance gender equality and empower women as their primary objective, in line with targets recommended by the UN.

February 2013

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Written evidence submitted by Global Justice Centre

1. The Global Justice Center (GJC) welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Commons Select Committee on Violence Against Women.
2. The GJC is an international human rights organization based in New York that uses legal expertise to shape and leverage international legal precedents in order to dismantle historically patriarchal legal and political structures and replace them with equality-based human rights precepts.

BACKGROUND

3. This submission addresses a particular issue related to violence against women that is often ignored, and on which the UK has the potential to assert global leadership: the denial of abortion to girls and women who are raped in situations of armed conflict in violation of their rights under international humanitarian law ("IHL").

4. This denial of access to safe abortion in humanitarian medical settings leads to the further victimization and inhumane treatment of these already brutalized victims of war. Studies have shown that for girls and women who become pregnant from rape in armed conflict, the physical consequences of rape are aggravated, as there is a direct link between armed conflict and increased rates of maternal mortality.¹ It has been found

that “unwanted pregnancies through rape (and gang rape) and the conditions imposed by war (malnutrition, anemia, malaria, exposure, stress, infection, disease), increase the risks defined by [the] baseline maternal mortality rate.”² Further, where women are denied abortions, they may resort to non-sterile or non-medical methods which can lead to death, infection, scarring or sterilization.³

5. Girls and women raped in situations of armed conflict are considered the “wounded and sick” with inalienable rights to non-discriminatory medical care under the Geneva Conventions and its Additional Protocols.⁴ To further protect these rights, IHL requires that doctors treating war victims and following the rules of medical ethics are immune from prosecution under domestic laws,⁵ including laws prohibiting abortion.

6. In contrast, boys and men who are “wounded and sick” in armed conflict, whether as victims of war rape or another weapon, are theoretically provided rehabilitative medical care in humanitarian medical settings designed to restore them to the highest level of physical and mental health. Girls and women raped and impregnated in armed conflict must, too, receive the same rehabilitative care as the “wounded and sick” with the same goal of restoring them to the highest level of physical and mental health; this is denied to those war rape victims who are forced to bear the child of their rapist, even in life-threatening circumstances.

7. The major providers of medical humanitarian services routinely exclude the option of abortion to girls and women raped in armed conflict. Although a few courageous doctors and agencies provide abortion services episodically, this provision is a discretionary humanitarian act, not as a recognition of a woman’s non-derogable legal right.

The extent to which DFID programmes on VAWG support the right policy instruments and reflect best practice, as outlined in DFID’s Theory of Change and related guidance, and the extent to which DFID’s humanitarian responses address VAWG

8. DfID policy and programs on VAWG, including the Gender Vision recognize the importance of “improved legal frameworks . . . that enable women and girls to . . . realise reproductive rights, and provide protection from violence . . .”. Furthermore, DFID is clear that the UK response to women in crisis situations, both conflict and natural disasters, includes supporting access to safe abortions.⁶ However, in the context of humanitarian aid, these policies fail to differentiate between who fall under the protections of international humanitarian law (victims of conflict) and those in other emergency contexts (eg victims of natural disasters).

9. The need to clearly differentiate in all UK policy frameworks that pertain to humanitarian aid between situations which are covered by IHL (armed conflict) and all other emergency situations is crucial. This is because the standard of protection imposed by IHL is radically different from any national or international legal standard of care for victims of other disasters and supersedes any contrary national laws, including criminal abortion laws.

10. In a recent debate in the House of Lords, Baroness Northover, speaking on behalf of the government, clearly stated the UK’s policy on humanitarian aid: “Parties to an armed conflict are obliged to provide all wounded and sick victims of armed conflict with humane treatment. To the extent practicable and with the least possible delay, they are obliged to provide the medical care and attention required by the given condition without discrimination except on medical grounds. This includes appropriate life-saving medical care which, in our view, may include the provision of abortion to women raped in conflict if it is deemed medically necessary.”⁷

11. However, this policy, which recognizes the special rights of women raped in war under humanitarian law, has yet to be incorporated into the relevant DfID policies, including the “Safe and unsafe abortion” Practice Paper, which limits the provision of DfID support for abortion services strictly to situations where abortion is legal under national law.

12. In order to better support VAWG programming in humanitarian aid, DfID should issue a clear policy statement on abortion and war victims to supplement existing policy statements, which makes clear that the right to abortion for girls and women raped in armed conflict is protected under IHL and is not subject to national laws on abortions.⁸ Such a policy should require that DfID funded medical programs in humanitarian settings inform girls and women raped and impregnated in armed conflict of their rights under IHL including their right to abortion as a component of non-discriminatory medical care.

13. DfID should also take steps to ensure that its grantees are in fact complying with these policies and offering the option of safe abortion to women war rape victims. Accordingly, DfID should require reporting by DfID funded programs involving care for women raped in armed conflict to provide data on the number of women treated, the medical services offered those women, the services provided, including the number of abortions, childbirth services or post-abortion care.

The effectiveness of DFID funding mechanisms for VAWG and the systems in place to measure their impact

14. A key concern with respect to the denial of abortion services to women raped in conflict is the impact of US abortion restrictions on UK/DfID funded aid. Even in those cases where UK funds can be used to provide abortion services to the extent of the law, these services are compromised by the United States’ abortion

ban on foreign aid, which prohibits all humanitarian entities funded by the US from speaking about abortion or providing abortion services.

15. UK funding is affected by the US abortion ban in two ways: (1) UK and US humanitarian aid is given largely to the same major organizations operating globally and since they do not segregate out US funds, the abortion ban is applied to the entire operation; and (2) in conflict areas there are a limited number of local health or social services organizations and they tend to be sub-grantees of entities funded by both the UK and US. So while in theory, UK aid is not directly subject to US abortion restrictions, due to the failure of most humanitarian grantees to segregate their funds, in practice, US restrictions do affect UK provided humanitarian aid.

16. It is likely that nearly all UK humanitarian aid funding for the medical care of women war victims, with the exception of funding to Médecins Sans Frontières (which does not accept US funds) or the World Health Organization (which successfully segregates its US funds for the Human Reproduction Program), is directly or indirectly compromised by US abortion restrictions (see Table 1 below).

Table 1

UK Funded Humanitarian Organizations and the US Abortion Ban

| <i>DFID Funded Organisation (2009/10)⁹</i> | <i>DfID Total</i> | <i>US Funded with abortion speech/ service ban</i> | <i>US Funds segregated from UK funds</i> |
|--|---------------------|--|--|
| International Committee of the Red Cross | £66,198,401 | yes ¹⁰ | No |
| Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs | £59,240,560 | yes ¹¹ | No |
| World Food Programme | £57,861,606 | yes ¹² | No |
| United Nations Development Programme | £42,129,614 | yes ¹³ | No |
| United Nations Children's Fund | £36,670,533 | yes ¹⁴ | No |
| UNDP/OCHA Pooled Fund for the Dem. Rep. of Congo | £30,000,000 | no ¹⁵ | No |
| United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees | £28,732,916 | yes ¹⁶ | No |
| World Health Organization | £11,123,729 | yes¹⁷ | Yes |
| Save the Children | £8,101,508 | yes ¹⁸ | No |
| DFID Direct Contribution ¹⁹ | £7,021,139 | N/A | N/A |
| Action Contre la Faim (Action Against Hunger) | £6,541,609 | Yes ²⁰ | No |
| International Organization for Migration | £5,508,722 | yes ²¹ | No |
| OXFAM UK | £5,919,264 | yes ²² | No |
| Crown Agents | £4,439,628 | yes ²³ | No |
| Food and Agriculture Organization | £4,242,160 | yes ²⁴ | No |
| International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies | £3,900,000 | yes ²⁵ | No |
| Care International | £3,421,959 | yes ²⁶ | No |
| Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development | £3,220,218 | yes ²⁷ | No |
| Merlin | £2,945,649 | yes ²⁸ | No |
| United Nations Relief and Works Agency | £2,136,873 | yes ²⁹ | No |
| Zanzibar Government | £2,004,008 | yes ³⁰ | No |
| Air Charter Services ³¹ | £1,946,873 | yes ³² | No |
| Tearfund | £1,894,078 | yes ³³ | No |
| Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) | £3,813,438 | no³⁴ | N/A |
| Mercy Corps | £1,715,218 | yes ³⁵ | No |
| United Nations Office for Project Services | £1,676,711 | yes ³⁶ | No |
| Other Agencies Combined | £25,817,634 | | |
| Total | £428,224,048 | | |

17. In this context, the UK should continue to engage³⁷ in bilateral discussions with the US on this issue and urge that the US government protect the rights of girls and women raped in war under common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions by lifting the abortion ban attached to US humanitarian aid for girls and women raped in armed conflict.

18. Furthermore, DfID should take steps to ensure that UK grantees, including the International Committee of the Red Cross,³⁸ are in fact taking affirmative measures to ensure that US abortion restrictions do not impact support provided by the UK, including requiring that all UK humanitarian aid grantees that provide services for women raped in armed conflict to segregate out its US funds from UK funds.

STRENGTH OF UK LEADERSHIP ROLE INTERNATIONALLY ON VAWG

19. The UK is a global leader on VAWG, and on sexual and reproductive rights, including abortion. As recently stated in the House of Lords by Baroness Northover, speaking on behalf of the government "the UK is one of only a handful of donors willing to tackle this contentious issue, and we will continue to do so. . . [and] . . . we are taking a lead here and will continue to do so."³⁹ Furthermore, as stated in the Government's

Humanitarian Policy, the UK has pledged to “promote adherence to international humanitarian law” globally in its humanitarian work.⁴⁰

20. The UK should act on this commitment by engaging in bilateral discussions with countries in armed conflict about the rights of women war victims to abortions, including the inapplicability of national abortion laws to persons entitled to absolute non-discriminatory medical care under IHL. The UK should also urge conflict states to make clear that IHL, not national law, determines the scope of medical care for women raped in war.

21. Additionally since UK humanitarian aid is also provided through the European Commission Humanitarian Office (“ECHO”), the UK should take leadership in the European Union by calling for the European Commission to take steps to affirmatively ensure and incorporate the rights of war rape victims to non-discriminatory medical under IHL.

Cross-governmental working within the UK, particularly co-operation between DFID, the FCO and the MOD on the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and the UK Government National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security

22. The need to address the denial of safe abortion to girls and women raped in armed conflict requires cooperation between all of these areas, in particular since the policy guidance on humanitarian aid on this issue comes from all of these areas.

23. For example, the denial of abortion to rape victims has been found to constitute cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and/or torture.⁴¹ Accordingly, the FCO *Strategy for the Prevention of Torture* should include that the denial of an abortion for a victim of war rape constitutes torture, and that they must follow the guidelines if they suspect this is happening overseas and report the situation to the government as per the FCO’s *Torture and Mistreatment Reporting Guidance*.

24. Furthermore, a clear declaration that the equal application of IHL for women victims of war rape includes a right to non-discriminatory medical care, including safe abortion services should be incorporated into the UK’s National Action Plan on Security Council Resolution 1325.

KEY EVENTS IN 2013

25. The “Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative” presents a unique opportunity for the UK to take global leadership on this issue, both at CSW and the G-8. This is because the conversation about the importance of access to abortion for these victims is absent from much of the conversation on sexual violence in conflict, including those efforts led by the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

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29 January 2013

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper is a response to the request for inputs by the International Development Committee for submissions to the Select Committee's announcement number 37 on violence against women and girls. In addressing this enquiry, attempt has been made to align the arguments to the Department for International Development (DFID) June 2012 paper; 'A theory of Change for Tackling Violence against women and girls. Reference has also been made to several gender frameworks such as the; U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) gender equality framework)

gender equality framework; UNAIDS Action Framework Addressing Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV, UNFPA Strategy and Framework for Action Addressing Gender-based ViolenceUNFPA Strategy and Framework for Action Addressing Gender-based Violence

. The discussion in this paper will therefore focus on the key issues raised in the enquiry.

2.0 BACKGROUND

All the literature on violence against women and girls consulted so far seem to converge on one common understanding that violence against women and girls is a deterrent to development and severely undermines women's potential and ability to effect change in the worldUNAIDS Action Framework Addressing Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV

. 'We cannot make poverty history unless we make violence against women history' Mrs. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, UNFPA Executive Director (2010). Although there is universal understanding of the effects of violence against women, it is mystifying to note that violence against women and girls continue being perpetuated with impunity. This can be attributed to a number of factors including culture, religious dogmas that suppress women, power dynamics which tilt in favour of men than women, gross disregard of human rights of women. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has consistently advocated that violence against women and girls is a human rights violation and a public health priorityUNFPA

. Such broad view of violence against women and girls forms bedrock for effective programmes addressing violence against women and girls. It is gratifying to note that there is growing realization by world leaders for the need to address violence against women and girls in all its forms. Violence against women will be the theme for the 57th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2013. It will also be a major theme of the UK-hosted G8 Summit in JuneInternational Development Committee release

3.0 THE EXTENT TO WHICH DFID PROGRAMMES ON VAWG SUPPORT THE RIGHT POLICY INSTRUMENTS AND REFLECT BEST PRACTICE, AS OUTLINED IN DFID'S THEORY OF CHANGE AND RELATED GUIDANCE

There is no doubt that the DFID programmes on VAWG support the right policy instruments and reflect best practice, as outlined in DFID's Theory of Change and related guidance. Whilst this is the case, contexts vary from one region to another. The manner in which each context is responded to also matters. There are variations between different regions of the world in terms of how fast policy can be translated into action. In most parts of the world where men still dominate, no matter how well articulated the policies maybe, they may just end up as another bunch of nicely written documents. This is because men would like to safe guard their positions. Therefore for DFID programmes to effectively support the right policy instruments there is need to invest substantial amount of resources in building local capacities as well as in monitoring the programmes. There is also need for a lot of advocacy with gatekeepers and custodians of dogmatic culture to win them to support the roll out of the programmes.

4.0 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DFID FUNDING MECHANISMS FOR VAWG AND THE SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO MEASURE THEIR IMPACT

DFID's conceptual framework as reflected in the June 2012 paper '*A theory of Change for Tackling Violence against women and girls*' clearly outlines the linkages amongst various programme components, making it easier to monitor and finance the activities. Whilst this is the case, it is important to note that effectiveness of the funding will largely depend on the nature of the activity. For example interventions with an element of service benefiting both the perpetrators of violence as well as the survivors are likely to be adopted and accepted more readily than those without. Similarly, interventions with punitive actions to the perpetrators of violence may not be accepted although they have a great impact.

5.0 STRENGTH OF UK LEADERSHIP ROLE INTERNATIONALLY ON VAWG, INCLUDING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DFID'S WORK WITH MULTILATERAL PARTNERS AND THE UK'S INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION FOR VAWG POSITION

This ought to have been done way back. DFID has a lot of clout at all levels and brings in substantial amount of resources especially in the developing countries. Leadership in this case also entails being champions of the cause at any level of intervention. DFID should brace itself to speak with authority on these matters and reflect the same at highest policy level to grassroots programme implementation level. This may entail capacity building in some cases and innovation in most of the cases. It has to be noted that there are numerous other well experienced agencies such as the UN, USAID and a myriad of Civil Society Organizations already in this area. There is therefore need to work with these actors in a collaborative manner. The DFID approach should be encouraged to further **strengthen its integrated approach to maximize the contribution of UK capabilities. As noted**, the UK's capacities go beyond Government. It should certainly also draw on the experience and expertise of the universities, NGOs, think tanks and the private sector. These organisations undoubtedly, have a depth of knowledge on so many issues about violence against women and girls.

6.0 CROSS-GOVERNMENTAL WORKING WITHIN THE UK, PARTICULARLY CO-OPERATION BETWEEN DFID, THE FCO AND THE MOD ON THE PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE INITIATIVE AND THE UK GOVERNMENT NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON UNSCR 1325 WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

It remains in the UK's interest to identify crises emerging within UK and overseas. This is because the impacts of conflict are rarely contained within a country's borders. In the long term, UK's prosperity and security is intertwined with peaceful development and security across the globe. The cost to the UK of managing conflict is always high. Armed Forces, with the human and financial costs may be required. The joint foreword by Mr. William Hague et al *Building Stability Overseas* contained in '*Building Stability Overseas*' Strategy probably ably covers the direction that UK should take in addressing point 6.0 above. Consolidation of democracies especially fragile democracies would go a long way to reduce conflicts in the world. Programmes aimed at building nations' capacities for peaceful conflict resolution should be given prominence. Implementing such strategy will require a consolidated effort, using UK's vast diplomatic, development and defence capabilities as well as drawing on external expertise. And as articulated in the strategy, UK through active expeditionary diplomacy could build stronger ties with countries which can work with UK to promote stability in the world. The same applies when it comes to working with international partners. UK is therefore well placed to its weight and influence in institutions such as the United Nations, the European Union, NATO and the International Financial Institutions.

7.0 KEY EVENTS IN 2013: THE 57TH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW) IN MARCH, AND THE G8 SUMMIT IN JUNE

The 57th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the G8 Summit to be held this year, avail themselves as enormous opportunities for raising the issues of violence against women and girls to the entire world. This is an opportunity to utilize and share the evidence abounding on physical and sexual violence against women, forced sexual initiation and abuse during pregnancy, evidence mainly drawn from credible and leading international surveys, including: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Reproductive Health Surveys, Demographic and Health Surveys, Violence against Women Surveys and the World Health Organization Multi-Country Studies. It must be noted that violence against women and girls takes many forms and occurs in many places—domestic violence in the home, sexual abuse of girls in schools, sexual harassment at work, rape by husbands or strangers, in refugee camps or as a tactic of war which if not fully comprehended could be sketchily covered. These two summits could be used as platforms to seriously engage on these key issues. It could also be an opportunity to mobilize resources for addressing violence against women and girls.

8.0 VAWG WITHIN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Although it is generally said that it has been difficult to firmly gauge the overall impacts of the MDGs. However according to written evidence submitted by Action Aid written submission to the UK International Development Committee (2012)

it is widely held that the MDG s have played a positive role in improvements to human development of course notwithstanding the uneven progress across the goals. The framework itself successfully provided springboards for governments, civil society organisations and business to rally around development programmes,

precipitating increases in aid flows from the North, budget increases and new policies as well as galvanising new players to act. Based on this experience VAWG within the post 2015 development goals will continue to feature as an important development area. Evidence abounds and future trends on violence against women and girls are likely to increase than decrease.

9.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there are all indications that violence against women will remain a key developmental challenge this century. It is a challenge that requires multi-pronged approach and a wide range of expertise. It also appears that there is presently good will and growing momentum worldwide to addressing issues of violence against women and girls. This offers an opportunity to mobilize all sorts of actors in this field to mount a concerted effort to reverse the current trends. The current trends are less inspiring considering that one in three women globally will be beaten or sexually abused in their lifetime. It is therefore fitting to conclude by quoting the then UNFPA Executive Director Mrs Thoraya Ahmed Odaid who once said; ‘We cannot make poverty history unless we make violence against women history’

January 2013

Written evidence submitted by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

SUMMARY

The IPCC has experience of conducting investigations in relation to allegations of domestic violence involving police contact where there is an allegation of police failure to protect the victim.

There are a number of outcomes arising from an IPCC investigation including criminal proceedings, disciplinary proceedings and learning recommendations to help improve the service for the future. The IPCC has made specific recommendations as a result of its investigations which have had a domestic violence element. A couple of these have had an international element and may therefore be of interest to the Committee’s inquiry. They address current gaps in the law. One is that offenders returning to the UK having served the equivalent of a life sentence in another jurisdiction are not subject to a life licence in this country as they would be if the offence had been committed in the UK. The other relates to the enforcement of non-molestation orders in a foreign country which have no legal basis in the UK.

THE IPCC’S ROLE IN INVESTIGATING CASES INVOLVING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1. The IPCC has a legal responsibility to independently investigate incidents of death or serious injury during or following police contact. This includes allegations of domestic violence involving police contact where there is an allegation of police failure to protect the victim.

2. As a result of emerging themes arising from these investigations, in 2009 the IPCC established a gender violence Strategic Support Group (SSG), comprising predominantly expert voluntary sector organisations, to review these cases and identify any lessons for both the IPCC and for policing more widely.

3. As a result of the work of the SSG and following specific investigations, a number of recommendations and areas of learning were identified and disseminated throughout the police service. Although the vast majority of the IPCC’s recommendations/areas of learning are restricted to policing practice within England and Wales, there have been a couple with international implications and which may therefore be of interest to the inquiry.

RELEVANT IPCC RECOMMENDATIONS/AREAS OF LEARNING

4. In December 2010, the IPCC published a report into the circumstances of the death of a woman in the Essex area. She had been tragically murdered by her ex-partner in December 2008.

5. The woman’s former partner, a British citizen, had previously spent 15 years in prison in Germany after a 1993 conviction for the murder of a girlfriend, before being deported to the UK. After his return, and prior to the murderous attack, he assaulted the second victim. The IPCC’s investigation discovered that, while UK authorities were aware of the man’s deportation from Germany in 1993, and the reason behind it, it was not legally possible to place on him the normal restrictions that those committing murder in the UK and serving life sentences here are subject to. Had the man committed the first murder offence in the UK he would have been on life licence following his release, and on his conviction for the earlier assault he would have been recalled to prison for an indefinite period.

6. In addition to finding a number of failings with the service that Essex police had provided, the IPCC Commissioner made a national recommendation to the Home Office about the gap in the law set out above. The relevant extract from the report is as follows:

The IPCC concludes that life licences should apply to offenders who return to the UK having served life sentences, regardless of the country in which the offence was committed or the life sentence served. We recommend that the Home Office should consider changes in legislation to apply to offenders who return to the UK having served a life sentence in another country to be made the

subject of a life licence. This would enable appropriate restrictions and measures to be considered and implemented to minimise the risk of harm to others.

7. The IPCC continues to seek updates on this matter and has recently been told that the Home Office and Ministry of Justice are continuing to discuss this issue.

8. The IPCC has also seen a number of cases where non-molestation orders (or similar) have been granted by foreign courts to protect a woman from harassment or abuse. Such a woman may then enter the UK and call the police to enforce the order granted abroad. However, these orders have no legal basis in the UK and are non-enforceable, meaning that the legal process has to start afresh. This situation has left vulnerable women even more at risk of harassment or abuse.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE IPCC

9. The IPCC was established by the Police Reform Act 2002 (PRA) and became operational in April 2004. Its primary statutory function is to secure and maintain public confidence in the police complaints system in England and Wales. It acts as an appeal body for some locally handled complaints and issues statutory guidance on complaints handling to police forces. It undertakes independent investigations into the most serious incidents and has the power to manage or supervise police investigations. Its statutory role also involves an obligation to measure, monitor and where necessary, seek to improve the current system. The IPCC is independent and makes its decisions independently of the police, Government and interest groups.

10. The IPCC was created following both public and political concerns about the lack of an independent system to deal with complaints and conduct matters within the police service. Since 2004, the organisation's remit has been extended to include serious complaints and conduct matters relating to staff at the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the UK Border Agency (UKBA).

11. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 has extended the IPCC's remit further. Since January 2012, the IPCC has been responsible for deciding whether any criminal allegations relating to the occupant of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPC) or his Deputy should be investigated. Since November, the IPCC has had a similar remit over Police and Crime Commissioners and their deputies.

12. The IPCC is run by a Chair, Deputy Chair and a number of Commissioners. Together they make up the Commission. Commissioners (other than the two non-executive Commissioners and the Chair) have an operational role and also have responsibility for oversight of the organisation as a whole. Commissioners are appointed by the Home Secretary and by law they must never have served as a police officer. The Commission is supported by a Chief Executive, a small management team and a staff of about 370. In 2011/12, the IPCC received an annual budget of £34.3m.

29 January 2013

Written evidence submitted by the Institute of Education, University of London

LEARNING FROM RESEARCH ON EARLY INTERVENTIONS ON ADDRESSING GENDER VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Whilst work addressing violence against women has been gaining momentum internationally over the past few decades, work addressing violence against girls specifically is much newer. In recent years, interest has grown in addressing gender violence within education, often linked to the Education for All agenda, with violence against girls increasingly recognised as a major barrier affecting girls' rights to and within education. However, interventions are still small in number and scale and knowledge of effectiveness of interventions is currently quite limited. A recent review identified a small handful of promising school gender violence interventions that were being evaluated, but many had weaknesses in their research and M&E systems and others with more robust systems are not yet complete, meaning that final impact evidence is not yet available (Leach et al. 2012). Therefore evidence is new and emerging.

This brief aims to summarise key learning from a project addressing gender violence in school, in which the contributors are carrying out research, together with evidence from other evaluated interventions. It should be noted that learning draws largely from sub-Saharan Africa, where most interventions addressing gender violence in schools are located. Our learning on addressing gender violence in the education sector broadly supports the best practice laid out in the DFID Theory of Change for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls. However, there are many issues specific to educational contexts and girls in particular which we look at in more detail below.

CONTRIBUTORS

This submission comes from an academic team at the Institute of Education, University of London working on education, gender and international development. Within the team, Dr. Jenny Parkes and Jo Heslop specialise

in research on gender violence and young people. Jenny Parkes has been leading research on gender violence and education for 13 years, carrying out research in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Mozambique and the UK. She is currently editing a book to be published by Routledge on “Gender Violence in Poverty Contexts: the Educational Challenge”, which brings together cutting edge research by leading experts and newer researchers. Jo Heslop has been working on issues around gender violence and young people for 13 years for NGOs and research organisations across Africa and Asia and has expertise in monitoring, evaluation and research on gender violence.

Jenny Parkes and Jo Heslop currently coordinate the research component of the ActionAid led project Stop Violence Against Girls in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique. This five year project incorporates research, advocacy and community interventions implemented by a partnership of organisations across several countries. The research component comprises quantitative and qualitative baseline and endline study across the three countries, and an in depth longitudinal study tracking girls’ capabilities to challenge violence over the course of the project and the role of social relations and institutions in contributing to change.

CONCEPTUALISING GENDER VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

1. Different conceptualisations of violence lead to different kinds of actions—and results. There can be a tendency to focus primarily on physical acts of violence, and in particular on the more extreme forms of violence, where agreement on the importance of taking action is relatively uncontroversial. However, this can steer interventions away from addressing the roots of violence in gender norms intersecting with economic, social and political inequalities. Conceptual understanding needs therefore to be regularly revisited throughout a project. Key approaches used to look at gender violence, and the kinds of actions they can lead to, are summarised below. Evidence suggests that the most effective interventions will incorporate and draw on the strengths of all three approaches.

| <i>Approach</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Interventions</i> |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Focus on acts and individuals | Violent acts are seen as aberrations carried out by individuals. Often the more extreme acts of physical and sexual violence may be emphasised. Quantitative methods are often used to measure prevalence of violence and may reveal previously hidden forms of violence and provide influential evidence. | Actions often revolve around punishments but may not look beyond the acts and individuals to see how they are located in relations and contexts. Any impacts tend to be short-lived and unsustainable as ideas about gender and violence are not changed. |
| Focus on institutions | Gender violence is located within unequal gender relations and is a manifestation of power inequalities and unjust institutions (including the education system, legal frameworks as well as gender norms). | Actions may focus on making schools safer and creating girl-friendly police and referral services. |
| Focus on interactions | Gender violence is expressed through performance of gender identities and everyday interactions. These can be complex, contradictory and fluid. Perspectives on meanings of eg violence and gender are important. For example if corporal punishment is seen as fair in certain circumstances and not in others this knowledge is seen as critical rather than the corporal punishment itself. This lens highlights the everydayness of violence, such as subtle forms of sexual bullying between peers or how girls may exchange sex for goods, linked to ideas about male providers as well as the realities of poverty contexts. | Interventions might include more dialogic and discursive approaches, such as working with girls and/or boys discussing girlhood, boyhood and violence—deconstructing gender discourse that can constrain girls’ agency, enabling recognition of previously taken for granted injustices and creating change from the bottom up. |

2. Within multi-partnered projects, at the outset there will be varying understandings of the meanings of violence and gender, which can lead to inconsistent and incoherent actions. It is important therefore that interventions addressing VAGS develop a common conceptual understanding for all actors in the project at the beginning of the project.

3. Clear conceptualisation is also very important when setting out goals, objectives, indicators, logframes and monitoring and evaluation frameworks (see “Monitoring and Evaluation” below).

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

4. Interventions and research on gender violence in schools need also to address gender violence in communities. They need to engage parents, community leaders, religious leaders, women’s group leaders, and other influencers in communities to enable conditions for change. They need to forge links and open communication between schools and communities.

5. Interventions will be more effective if they work at multiple levels, from school up to national (and international) level. A legal and policy analysis at the start of a programme can help identify key policy gaps and objectives. Our experience shows that there are often concerted efforts to influence national policies and

to work at localised school level. More programming and resources need to be focused towards the middle—how policies are turned into appropriately resourced action plans and the role of regional and local government in enacting policies and laws (particularly effective response and referral systems).

6. While intervening at state level is of paramount importance, these “top down” approaches need to be accompanied by “bottom up” approaches. Our research findings indicate that girls clubs may raise consciousness about violence, increase girls’ capacity to challenge violence and inequalities, demand for violence prevention and response services and then use these services.

7. However, empowering girls to challenge violence without paying sufficient attention to other groups may put girls at increased risk. Working with boys, teachers, parents and leadership on the same issues and creating opportunities and safe spaces for dialogue, problem solving and forming alliances between groups is vital for enabling change.

8. Promising strategies with teachers include the following. Ensuring reasonable representation of female teachers in schools is important. Female teachers are not necessarily more gender sensitive but no schools should have no female teachers. A sympathetic female teacher can be trained and supported to run girls’ clubs and act as a mentor for girls, helping with personal, social and educational challenges experienced by girls, including those related to gender violence and adolescence. Teacher training in gender violence and alternative positive methods of discipline are effective at reducing corporal punishment in schools and helping to make schools more girl-friendly. In-service training of teachers should where possible involve the head teacher to enable school—level change. High levels of teacher movement between schools in some contexts can affect sustainability of school-based teacher training, where learning is not always shared with newcomers and this needs to be taken into account when considering how such training can be institutionalised within education systems.

9. Interventions at school level can be guided by the development of school policies on gender violence, which set out prevention and response approaches (which in turn should be guided by national frameworks as well as local concerns). These can be supported by the development of school plans and budgets that address these concerns. These processes need to be carefully facilitated and supported where there may be limited capacity in understanding and addressing gender inequalities and violence. They may include some of the following: Ensuring clean, safe, functioning and sex separated toilets, working with School Management Committee on gender-sensitive school plans, and working with boys’ clubs as a forum to help boys understand violence, promote alternative notions of masculinity and create solidarity in challenging gender violence.

10. School based programmes are easier to implement in well managed schools and yet violence levels may be higher in schools with ineffective policy and procedures for preventing and responding to violence. In studies in urban contexts of South Africa and the UK, we have noted that such schools, often located in areas of high socio-economic deprivation, may therefore be at most need of support and yet least able to engage with interventions by for example NGOs. One way to address this is to target interventions at schools “at the sharp end” of community violence and economic inequality, but to ensure that interventions are flexible, negotiated and adapted to the specific needs of school communities.

11. Collaborations between formal and informal sectors is critical in contexts where state service provision may be low and communities may place more value and trust in traditional, customary or community welfare and justice systems. Sometimes these approaches offer solutions that may not be in the best interests of the girls, such as a girl marrying her rapist or her parents receiving an apology or small fine. Creating dialogue, linkages and referral points between for example traditional leaders and police is important to ensure that girls who have experienced violence get access to justice. Promising practice from Ghana includes training and supporting a group of community activists who help ensure that cases are referred to the right people and handled in appropriate ways with girls’ interests paramount. These approaches need to be accompanied by support and investment in state services (education, health, justice, social welfare, human rights, children, gender) to enable better response, coordination and referral in cases of gender violence. Creating fora of key state and non-state actors for example at district level can help in developing coordinated girl friendly response mechanisms at the local level. Ideally these are mirrored by collaborations at national level.

12. Thorough research is needed before project designs are finalised to give a comprehensive and contextual understanding of how gender violence is manifested and understood in schools and communities. Our experience shows that even with one small sub-district area these (and subsequently appropriate strategies) can vary widely. Rurality, urbanity or connectedness of communities can play a role, as can employment opportunities and livelihood practices, historical tensions between groups, ethnic and religious make up of communities and levels of inequalities. Tradition and modernity have a key bearing on how forms of violence can be manifested. Therefore interventions, whilst sharing a broad common strategy, need to be located in the specific contexts in which they operate.

13. There is a conceptual and practical difficulty addressing childhood and adolescent sexuality within gender violence in schools programmes. Often in these programmes children tend to be seen as innocent and in need of protection. A “right to say no” is emphasised where schoolgirls may be subjected to sexual advances of boys and older men. In many contexts (including the Stop Violence project locations in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique) teenage sex—at least for girls—may be seen as taboo, with access to information and contraception denied. The notion of free will and consent is difficult to determine in contexts where gift/

financial giving is common in all relationships, and in particular where girls are living in poverty. The legal context is important too, where sex involving a girl under 18 is considered a crime (defilement) in many countries, whether it is consensual or not, and responses are increasingly focusing on punishing boys and men who are found to have impregnated girls under 18. Projects that over-emphasise dangers risk further stigmatising adolescent sexual activity and limiting girls' sexual agency with negative consequences for sexual and reproductive health and rights outcomes. We recommend that interventions emphasise girls' rights to bodily integrity and being able to make decisions about own bodies. This may not always be easy in contexts with strong moral codes around sexuality. Links with the health sector (eg HIV prevention) can help. For example, comprehensive sexuality and relationships education should form part of any gender violence in schools intervention.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING INTERVENTIONS

14. Our research shows that change happens in non-linear and uneven ways and is difficult to predict. Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection are both important for understanding the process of change, including what is changing, by how much and why.

15. Change linked to deeply entrenched social norms happens very slowly. Long term funding is recommended (preferably 10 years).

16. Measuring violence is fraught with challenges. In the countries we are working in, government records (eg police, health) are insufficiently robust to be useful in monitoring project success. There is a need for concerted capacity building in reporting and referral systems and in record keeping. Collecting data from children on experiences of violence is also challenging and requires a high level of expertise. Different meanings attached to words and the sensitive and taboo nature of the issues create major ethical and methodological challenges. Data collected risks being meaningless or potentially harmful. A review carried out in 2011 (Leach et al.) recommended that research organisations with high levels of expertise play a role in developing systems to measure and monitor data around violence and in building capacity of actors in taking work forward. Monitoring and evaluation in this area needs a high level of investment for it to be done adequately.

17. Proxy indicators (eg self-reported attitudes to violence) are often used to bypass the challenges of data accuracy. While such indicators are important, it is important to recognise that changes in attitudes do not necessarily lead to changing behaviours and practices. Therefore, these indicators should be accompanied by those addressing incidence of violence, where sufficient investment and expertise is in place to ensure robust evidence can be collected.

February 2013

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Learning summarised in this paper is taken from the following sources of rigorous academic research, and from ongoing research work and experiences in the Stop Violence Against Girls Project.

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Written evidence submitted by Dr Purna Sen, London School of Economics

1. This Inquiry by the IDC is welcome. It illustrates the growing recognition that VAW is a central development concern and that it remains to be adequately recognised and addressed.

2. The comments in this submission pull together the experiences of twenty years of work on violence against women, international development and human rights. A number of conceptual points are raised, in the understanding that other submissions have drawn together research and knowledge on the practice of policy and interventions on violence against women (hereinafter VAW). The primary focus of this brief note is to identify key outstanding or inadequately addressed areas needing attention in the near future.

3. The relationship between violence and power has increasing recognition as does the correlated understanding of violence as efforts either to rob power from another or to exert control over another. The vast majority of violence meted out, whether to men or women, is by men. This gendered aspect of violence is what the VAW discourse has captured, although its integration into development work remains partial.

4. While in development the (post-)conflict interest has been a totem, the reality of violence pervades all areas of public and private life; in or out, before, after or beyond conflict.

5. There are six key points I wish to bring to the attention of the Committee:

These are

- 5.1 There is tardy and patchy recognition of VAW as a development concern.
- 5.2 VAW is a pervasive, corrosive blight on the lives of women all over the world whether in conflict or not, rich or poor country, affluent or poor community. Adequately holistic understandings and approaches are yet to be achieved.
- 5.3 VAW and development both have clear human rights dimensions, the nexus between the three remains to be strengthened and released from a legalistic grasp.
- 5.4 Governments have obligations to address violence and women's networks have proved effective in supporting women; both need support and encouragement.
- 5.5 Culture and gender inequality/vaw are not co-terminous and there needs to be a much more complex and robust approach to the relationship between these and how they might be addressed.
- 5.6 Leadership is needed to ensure that VAW is central in the 2015-agenda.

6. *There is tardy and patchy recognition of VAW as a development concern*

6.1 In 1998 I wrote (Sen 1998) of three identifiable approaches to the link between VAW and development. These were—efficiency/effectiveness arguments, participation and the human development/rights frameworks. These remain broadly useful categories for understanding how the development discourse has incorporated VAW but the reach of such thinking, while improving, is not as broad as it needs to be to make a difference in women's lives. There is a dominance of conflict-related interest, linking as it does to other violence which is conflict-related and offering a gender dimension to post-conflict recovery and reconstruction agendas as well as the peace-building, Res 1325 agendas. I will return to conflict-related concerns below. First, a brief and simplified summary of the three dominant approaches.

6.2 An efficiency argument focusing on violence considers that violated women are a wasted resource, most often because their participation in the labour force is constrained, or due to the unacceptable and avoidable economic costs of violence against women:

- 6.2.1 *Costs*: rape and domestic violence “account for about 5% of the total disease burden among women aged 15–44 in developing countries” (World Bank); WHO determines violence to be a major cause of death and disability for women aged 16–44; direct and indirect financial costs are borne by individuals and the state, eg lost days at work, lost earnings, increased health-care demand, emergency housing costs, a need for child guidance, counselling, psychiatric, and legal services, involvement of police and penal institutions.
- 6.2.2 *Participation* has been a touchstone for the definition of “good” and inclusive development and has extended to seek the participation of women. The costs or obstacles to participation have not always been well thought through, including for women who live with or risk violence. Women's engagement in the public sphere can risk the onset or exacerbation of violence at home, as might activity in mixed company or women's acquisition of a separate income. Likewise, where public space remains a male preserve, women's movements can put them at risk of sexual or other abuse there or subject them to labelling, and all that follows, associated with being uncontrolled or of bad character.
- 6.2.3 The *human rights* field came finally to recognise VAW as a concern in the 1990s and this has found connection with the development discourse to a limited extent. The *human development* paradigm places the aim of widening the range of choices available to people, at the heart of the development project. For this to have real meaning for women, there is an imperative to

eliminate violence from their lives as this incontestably limits the nature and range of choices to which women have access.

6.3 Each of these approaches can resonate with a different audience, expert community. What remains depressingly the case though is that there are many, especially on the “hard” side of development discourse including economics, that remain somehow untouched by the relevance of VAW. Gender mainstreaming has made some headway but a fresh effort to show why and how VAW results from or inhibits so many development objectives is needed.

7. Vaw is a pervasive, corrosive blight on the lives of women all over the world whether in conflict or not, rich or poor country, affluent or poor community. Adequately holistic understandings and approaches are yet to be achieved.

7.1 There has rightly been a recognition of the pervasive and rampant nature of sexual abuse at times of conflict. The Balkans, Rwanda and Congo have focused attention and brought imaginable abuse to public attention. They have also rightly prompted sexual abuse to feature in accountability mechanisms, such as the ICTY and ICTR but also in the Rome Statute of the ICC. Indeed the ICTR has re-framed very helpfully the definition of rape and sexual violence in law. Efforts on this front must not be lost; they must be reflected in efforts beyond the conflict zone.

7.2 Recent cases of violence against women which have caught the attention of the media and public include the gang-rapes in India and Steubenville USA, the sexual harassment and assault of women in Cairo, the rape horrors in Congo and in the UK the Savile and Rochdale cases. There is perhaps a gradual but growing understanding that VAW and girls is not confined either to times and areas of formal conflict nor is it a corollary of individual poverty or poor countries. It is any woman anywhere who is vulnerable. The human rights discourse has come to understand that torture can be known by those not at odds with the state or government but between intimates or strangers and that the principle of due diligence is helpful in seeking adequate state attention to the issue and the processes through which it should be addressed.

7.3 Much development concern, project and programme interventions have regard to the labour force participation of women and/or income generating maximisation. Where such activities disrupt prevailing gender regimes they place women at enhanced risk of abuse, both from intimate partners but also in the workplace. There remains, in my experience, a strikingly poor understanding of such dimensions. This is not aided by VAW being strongly associated with post/conflict scenarios to the extent that other dimensions risk being lost.

7.4 A public discourse, though belated, that notices and is outraged by VAW across the world should infuse international conversations both with a dynamic of solidarity but also with a tone of humility from those who have sought to offer solutions from the west/industrialised countries to others.

7.5 This has three implications for addressing VAW in development:

- 7.5.1 That addressing VAW in development needs to be understood as part of a holistic approach to VAW that encompasses efforts in the UK as well as in other countries: a cross-departmental and co-ordinated approach is needed
- 7.5.2 That any serious efforts to address VAW must be broadened from conflict related situations. To be clear, this is not to argue that conflict and peace-building are illegitimate areas in which to address VAW but instead to argue that these are not discrete or fully adequate boundaries to set on the field of understanding, inquiry or engagement.
- 7.5.3 That there need to be conversations of mutual learning between the UK and those elsewhere with whom FCO and DfID are working

8. VAW and development both have clear human rights dimensions, the nexus between the three remains to be strengthened and released from a legalistic grasp

8.1 The previous section begins to explore the lessons to be learned from the nature of human rights take up of VAW, even if tardy. The acceptance of VAW as a rights issue has progressed over the last 20 years including through an understanding of torture and other rights violations as experienced in the lives of abused women. The search for accountability and against impunity has also taken in women experiences of violence .

8.2 The incremental progress so far achieved on rights based approaches to development allows us to think about the pursuit of the concept of violence-free lives for all as being central to development. The Declaration on the Right to Development too offers potential for a closer relationship between the two discourses but the reality of its progress is limited.

8.3 The discomfort between the two is in part due to the predominantly legalistic nature of the human rights field and the predominantly economic approaches of the development field. Both discourses are of course more varied and richer than this characterisation but as a snapshot I think it not unfair. The two disciplines are surprisingly poorly acquainted.

8.4 There remains considerable work to be done on facilitating mutually respectful and learning conversations between specialists in VAW, development and human rights. It would be valuable were the UK to facilitate the further strengthening of inter-disciplinary approaches.

9. Governments have obligations to address violence and women's networks have proved effective in supporting women; both need support and encouragement

9.1 Over the last 30 years there has been a growing recognition of the role of the women's sector in many countries, in dragging public attention to VAW, placing it on public policy agendas, pushing the human rights take up of the issue and supporting and strengthening victims. A recent study affirms the pivotal role of civil society in the quality and nature of policy development (Htun and Weldon 2012). The role of NGOs in service delivery work has had longer recognition.

9.2 While legally and in the human rights framework the primary responsibility for protection and redress lies with states, the expertise and knowledge of what makes a difference in reducing and eliminating VAW lies primarily in civil society and, to some extent, in academia.

9.3 Development interventions and diplomatic engagements need to recognise the different roles, responsibilities and contributions of these two sectors. Support flowing from this will strengthen the relevant actors in their complementary roles. There should also be a robust understanding that these will at times be at odds with each other and the relationships may be fractious.

10. Culture and gender inequality/vaw are not co-terminous; there needs to be a much more complex and robust approach to the relationship between these and how they might be addressed

10.1 Cross cultural conversations on VAW can suffer from excessive deference to difference and diversity or an aggressive sense of cultural superiority, neither of which approach really assists women dealing with violence. Dialogues on child marriage, crimes of "honour", dowry, FGM and many other forms of violence often become tangled in angst about interference in the cultural norms of others or in crude directives that require a "westernising" direction of travel. Neither is helpful.

10.2 There is an urgent need for nuanced understandings, dialogues and engagements that recognise the cultural contexts in which women find themselves yet support and strengthen efforts to build lives free of abuse. There is no shortage of voices and action within cultural contexts that drive a dynamic for change to the betterment of women's lives.

10.3 International standards, as in the human rights framework, provide very helpful reference points for women contesting traditional practices and require robust defence from donors, at home and abroad. The way in which this is done is worthy of further attention towards mutually respectful conversations that recognise cultural variety and women-harming practices and beliefs in all contexts.

11. Leadership is needed to ensure that VAW is central in the post-2015 agenda

11.1 As Co-Chair of the High Level Panel the UK is well placed to influence their shape. The UK can advocate a stand-alone target on gender equality, within which VAW should have explicit mention and outcomes. There is adequate expertise on this subject that measurable targets can be fleshed out.

11.2 Were the UK to champion such a goal it would show recognition for the struggle of women all over the world to have their challenges taken seriously and to stand beside anti-VAW advocates in their quest to eliminate violence.

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**Written evidence submitted by the Gender Violence and Health Centre (GVHC)
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine**

SUMMARY

Members of the Gender Violence and Health Centre (GVHC) at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine welcome the opportunity to share our views on the DFID's evolving programme on violence against women and girls. In this submission, we concentrate on elements of DFID's programme that relate to research and evaluation, our primary area of expertise, but touch briefly on larger issues affecting the effectiveness of the UK government's commitment to addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Specifically we discuss:

- The strength of the UK government's leadership on VAWG internationally.

- Benefits and weaknesses of DFID’s current approach to research and generating evidence to inform policy and programmes.
- Underexploited opportunities to create synergies between DFID programme areas and strategies of work.
- Broadening DFID’s humanitarian programming on VAWG.
- Increasing integration of VAW programming across DFID’s programmes.
- Improving policy coherence across Whitehall and the wider UK government.

To help tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG) more effectively, and improve the processing of generating evidence to inform future work, we propose that the UK Government:

1. Lengthen the average timeline for research grants designed to generate evidence for informing policy and programmes on VAWG, recognising that change may not occur over short times
2. Ensure that interventions are optimized before investing funds to evaluate their impact
3. Adapt Dfid’s model of funding research and programme consortia (RPCs) to its work on VAWG, including a one year inception period for programmes designed to evaluate complex interventions related to VAWG
4. Commit to piloting new interventions before seeking to evaluate them for impact
5. Consider adopting a “programme science” approach to expanding and evaluating programmes to address VAWG in low income countries
6. Re-orient DFID’s portfolio of projects on VAWG to better align them with its theory of change
7. Broaden DFID’s humanitarian work on VAWG from conflict-related sexual violence to include the full range of gender-based abuses that displaced women and women in conflict experience
8. Strengthen and institutionalise technical expertise on VAWG within DFID, including the provision of basic orientation information on VAWG to all DFID staff, and institutionalise senior positions within the organisation, to serve as technical experts and support the achievement of programme and policy commitments
9. Seek synergies between DFID programming on early childhood development and child health, and its programming on VAWG, and recognise the value of programmes to address VAWG for other areas of health and development, including HIV, maternal health, and mental health.
10. Ensure that the Ministerial Champion on Violence Against Women and Girls Overseas has the access, authority and resources to drive the international section of the cross-government strategy forward across all government departments.
11. When competing contracts, ring fence funding for women’s rights organisations and prioritise applicants that have a demonstrated track record of working effectively on women’s issues, and be sensitive to the risks that small but established civil society groups may be less well placed to bid for large contracts, but have greater expertise in this area.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In response to the request for input into the UK’s International Development Committee’s inquiry about programming to prevent violence against women and girls, we would like to offer our insights as a group of experts who have worked for the past two decades researching and campaigning to stop violence against women and girls. Together we work at the Gender Violence and Health Centre (GVHC) of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, with the group having expertise in impact evaluation, qualitative research, quantitative data analysis, systematic reviews and economic evaluation.

1.2 Researchers at GVHC have been involved in implementing several large-scale and small projects funded by DFID. This includes interventions research in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa, that demonstrated a 55% reduction in intimate partner violence; an on-going assessment of efforts to reduce trafficking and its associated harms among women in the Mekong Region of South East Asia; research in Tanzania on the relationship between women’s economic development and violence; and a research programme consortium (RPC) known as STRIVE, that is dedicated to generating evidence on how to address the structural drivers of HIV, including gender inequalities and violence. This research programme includes prevention intervention research in Uganda and Tanzania. In addition, GVHC has are now involved with trials of partner violence interventions in Bihar, India (funded by DFID) and Cote d’Ivoire. Overall, our group’s expertise focuses primarily on prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and its health-related consequences, but we are increasingly focusing also on the links with child abuse. As well as primary data collection, our group is known for its cross-national research and guidance, including Prof Watts chairing the Global Expert Review on the extent of intimate partner violence and its health impacts; Dr Zimmerman’s leadership in the development of guidelines on support to survivors of trafficking; design and Dr Heise’s synthesis of evidence on effective prevention.

1.3 We draw on this body of work and our long-standing collaborations with Southern and International partners to offer the following observations and suggestions regarding DFID’s programme of related to VAWG.

2.0 STRENGTH OF UK LEADERSHIP ROLE INTERNATIONALLY ON VAWG

2.1 **Global leadership** DFID is to be congratulated for taking a global lead in policy dialogue, interventions and generation of evidence on VAWG. In our assessment, DFID is one of the four governmental entities (including AusAID, Irish Aid and the recently announced US global programme on VAWG) that have elevated violence to the level of global attention that it deserves. DFID has expanded funding available to support work to reduce violence and support victims, and has made a visible commitment to pursue evidence-informed programming in this area.

2.2 **Emphasis on evidence** DFID has proven its dedication to “evidence-informed” programming through commissioning a large-scale literature review conducted by Dr. Lori Heise of our group, entitled: *What works to prevent partner violence?* This review summarises the available evidence on factors causally linked to partner violence and on what is known from research to reduce either abuse or the proximate determinants of abuse.¹ In addition, they commissioned the Gender and Development Network (GADNet) to develop a theory of change to guide their programming² and a series of guidance notes for DFID programme officers on evaluating violence interventions³ and on implementing community-level prevention programmes.⁴

2.3 In addition, DFID should be recognized for seeking to strengthen the global evidence base on strategies to effectively address VAWG, including female genital cutting, partner violence and violence in conflict situations. DFID has demonstrated this commitment by sponsoring several large impact assessments of programmes to reduce violence, including its current programming to design and evaluate interventions to reduce partner violence in Bihar India and to evaluate efforts to reduce human trafficking in the Mekong region. Soon they will be announcing major initiatives to combat FGC and support further programming and evaluation research through its planned “innovations fund on VAWG.” The details of these initiatives are not yet available so it is impossible at this juncture to comment on their design or implementation. How these two initiatives are structured, however, is likely to influence greatly the future effectiveness of DFID’s programming.

3.0 STRENGTHS OF DFID PROGRAMMING ON VAWG

3.3 **Mapping and theory of change.** DFID recently developed a theory of change to guide its programming and completed a mapping of its work globally on VAWG. This is an important first step in rationalising its investments and reconciling its grant-making with its new theory of change. However, in our view, DFID’s current portfolio suggests an over-commitment to reforming formal justice, social service and health systems as a core strategy for responding to the needs of victims and for deterring future violence. Since less than 10% percent of survivors in most settings ever reach out to formal institutions,⁵ strategies focused exclusively on formal services miss the lion’s share of the problem. Moreover, while services can assist individual women to escape violence, they have a limited preventive effect. Our research suggests that globally, almost three in 10 partnered women will experience violence, with higher values in many developing country settings. Such high levels of violence, alongside generally low levels of formal service use, highlight the critical need to invest in prevention, as well as broader legal and support services for survivors of violence.

3.4 Nonetheless, we see positive shifts toward greater emphasis on prevention and cultivating community-led strategies for responding to the needs of victims in DFID’s new theory of change. The ToC outlines the four specific sets of interventions DFID should pursue to eliminate all forms of VAWG:

1. Empower women and girls.
2. Change the social norms that condone and perpetuate VAWG.
3. Build political will and legal and institutional capacity to prevent and respond to VAWG.
4. Increase the provision of comprehensive services for women and girls that are victims and survivors of violence.

3.5 To reconcile its programming with its revised TOC, DFID will need to greatly increase its emphasis on empowering women and girls and changing social norms that condone and maintain VAWG. This will require shifts in country-level priorities and the ability to monitor whether the required shifts in investment are occurring.

3.6. **Adapting DFID’s RPC model to VAWG.** DFID has several existing models of programming and evaluation that could productively be expanded in its work on VAWG. One especially relevant model is DFID’s strategy of supporting Consortia of researchers and implementing agencies over six to eight years to generate a programme of structured learning about a topic such as VAWG. Typically, DFID sets out the desired outcomes and terms of engagement, and groups of researchers, NGOs, and governmental bodies come together as a team to compete for the available funding. The first round of competition requires a broad brush vision of the proposed programme of work and a firm commitment to collaborate. DFID then picks the top three or four contenders and they are invited to submit full proposals for consideration. Importantly, DFID provides £10,000 up front to these teams to meet and work on the design of their proposal. This opportunity to meet is critical to the long-term success of these endeavours because it allows all partners to have input into the design of the work plan from the beginning. Establishing the terms of engagement and building trust early on, helps ensure that the partners will be able to negotiate the differences in power and perspective inherent in such

collaborations (North South divides; differences in disciplinary perspective; and orientations toward research versus implementation, etc.).

3.5 **Sustained Funding.** Also critical to the success of this model of knowledge generation is the six year time frame and the incorporation of a one year “inception” period for planning. Sustained funding over at least six years is an almost essential feature of evaluating interventions that are attempting to address deeply embedded patterns of behaviour like violence. One of the weaknesses of the current funding regime more broadly is the requirement to demonstrate “results” in two to three year time frames. As described further in paragraph 4.3, such time frames are generally unrealistic when attempting to evaluate complex, social interventions. DFID’s programming on VAWG is moving toward more sustained funding, as evidenced by its support for violence work in Bihar. But the majority of its support is still relatively short term, given the nature of the task at hand.

4.0 WEAKNESSES IN CURRENT APPROACH TO VAWG PROGRAMMING

4.1 **Unrealistic Expectations.** We are concerned that DFID has unrealistic expectations about the state of knowledge in the VAWG field and in the costs and challenges of generating new knowledge to inform policy and programmes. While the field has gained many well-founded insights into factors that contribute to gender-based violence in different settings, and there is starting to be evidence on the impacts of different models of intervention, the field of violence prevention is less than a decade old and the evidence available to inform interventions varies greatly by setting and type of violence. Thus far, we have more evidence to inform programming in the areas of FGC and partner violence than we have in sexual exploitation, violence in conflict situations, child sexual abuse, acid throwing, or honour crimes. Even with FGC and partner violence, however, experience trying to prevent these forms of violence rather than dealing with their consequences, is relatively new. Even newer, are efforts to rigorously evaluate those approaches that are being tried. For this reason, it is very important that new interventions are evaluated, but new initiatives need to be sensitive to the state of the field and knowledge.

4.2 Importantly, the state of knowledge into how to prevent and respond to VAWG effectively is no less developed than many other areas of social policy, which also share a dearth of clear evidence to guide investment and policy making. Thus absence of evidence should not be used as an excuse for inaction; rather it argues for moving forward in a thoughtful and informed way. It is important that DFID explicitly seeks to maximise opportunities for thoughtful learning and sharing in its investment in this area.

4.3 Evaluation strategies for complex interventions are costly, because they must be implemented at a community rather than an individual level. This means that to implement a randomized controlled trial (RCT)—the gold standard of evaluation research—often requires randomising whole communities or neighbourhoods, rather than individuals, to receive an intervention. Since the intervention must be implemented in a large number of communities in order to achieve statistical power to detect an effect, community randomised trials can easily cost £1+ million or more. The number of communities or clusters that must receive the intervention likewise, frequently taxes the ability of the implementing agency to deliver and monitor the programme. As a result, there is tension between the need to move quickly, the quality control that can be maintained on the intervention, and the cost and size of a trial. It is our experience that DFID, like many donors, frequently underestimate the complexity and cost of delivering the type of “evidence” they seek. This leads to corners being cut that undermine the validity of the entire exercise.

4.4 **Need to optimize programming before evaluation.** The short time frames of project support and DFID’s commitment to generate evidence has resulted in a rush for evaluation, with the risk that substantial sums are invested in evaluating programmes that are sub-par. The pressure to generate evidence quickly means that programmes are being evaluated before their implementation and design have been fully optimized. We recommend that in all complex evaluations DFID adopt a **one year inception period**, where researchers and programme staff work together to optimize the design and delivery of the programme before formal impact evaluation begins (ie baseline data are collected). We further recommend that prior to investing large sums to evaluate the potential impact of newly designed interventions, that they **be piloted** to work out problems, inform the ultimate intervention design, and generate the site-specific data (such as inter-cluster variation estimates) necessary to ensure that the evaluation will have the power to capture an impact, should it be there. Presently, the desire to move quickly is jeopardising the validity of programme findings and potentially wasting substantial sums of money.

4.5 **Adopting a programme science model.** DFID’s violence portfolio should include other models of evaluation that can help generate vital learning in areas where formal impact assessment is impossible or not yet warranted. Increasingly the field of HIV prevention is adopting a model of assessment known as “programme science.” Programme science embeds researchers into large scale programmes as they are developed and rolled out, encouraging active learning and the immediate feedback of lessons learned into the refinement of the programmes.⁶ Programme science not only seeks to answer whether something “works”, but also uses research to help “build the helicopter as you are flying it.” It is geared toward learning by doing, constant programme modification, and capturing insights along the way. Given the need to move forward with programming while generating evidence, DFID could be well-served by this type of research model.

5.0 BROADEN DFID'S HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMING ON VAWG

5.1 In conflict-affected settings, women and girls appear to be equally, if not more likely to experience a range of non-conflict-related violence, such as domestic violence, acquaintance rape, child sexual abuse.⁷ For example, findings from the GVHC-IRC survey in Cote d'Ivoire demonstrates that even in conflict affected settings, the burden of partner violence is larger than that related to the conflict.⁸ Given this reality, DFID's humanitarian programming should broaden its focus from conflict-related sexual violence to include the full range of gender-based abuses that displaced women and women in conflict experience.

6.0 INCREASE INTEGRATION OF VAW PROGRAMMING ACROSS DFID PROGRAMMES

6.1 While the portfolio of work on VAWG within DFID is ambitious, it is currently siloed, rather than being integrated systematically across the work of the organisation. There is a need for a stronger focus on VAWG as a core issue across all of DFID's programming, in particular, in the areas of water and sanitation, education, health and emergency response. Although programming in various areas has begun to identify the potential "gendered" effects of proposed activities (eg, water and sanitation assessment of safe distances for women to walk for water), to date, these programmes are not incorporating the input of local and international experts in violence against women. VAWG is a technical area, and it is important that appropriate input is received when designing programmes if there is going to be a more meaningful investment in addressing the potential causes and consequences of violence.

7.0 STRENGTHEN AND INSTITUTIONALISE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE ON VAWG WITHIN DFID

7.1 *Institutionalise expertise within DFID* Like other areas of development work, VAWG is an area of technical expertise. There are real dangers that ill-conceived programmes can actually put women at greater risk of violence, or reinforcing gender inequalities in the community. Interventions need to be carefully designed and implemented, with considerations of women's and girl's safety and agency at their core, and it is important that all staff have basic understanding of the issues at hand. In addition, those developing country programmes and international policy requires access to individuals with deep knowledge and experience with VAWG. Recently DFID issued an RFA to contract individuals with technical expertise to assist their staff in designing country-level programmes. This is a step in the right direction. However, **DFID requires at least some senior, full time staff in charge of this area of expertise.** Presently, DFID headquarters seems to be relying on seconded staff from women's organisations to fulfil this role. The post is neither full-time nor permanent and has been filled with a host of different individuals who have rotated through, making continuity difficult, both within DFID and in relation to its work with groups and agencies in this area.

8.0 PURSUE SYNERGIES BETWEEN VAWG PROGRAMMING AND WORK WITH CHILDREN

8.1 As detailed in the DFID and ESRC funded document, *What Works to Prevent Partner Violence*, there are many strategic reasons to better integrate violence with DFID's work with children and social protection programmes. One of the strongest causal factors in perpetration of partner violence is exposure to violence during childhood. Witnessing or experiencing violence affects a child's developing brain, making them more likely to exhibit anti-social behaviour in adolescence and violence in adulthood; it likewise distorts their understanding of acceptable ways to exert power and get what you want. There are many unexploited opportunities to reduce the long term impacts of violence on children's development and to help prevent future violence by working through parenting and early childhood development programmes. Research has shown that early intervention can overcome the negative impacts of early exposure to violence on future behaviour.

8.2 Increasingly, the impacts of VAWG on health and development are being recognised. Effective prevention to address VAWG, including programmes to empower women, and shift gender norms about the acceptability of violence, and men's and women's roles and expectations in relationships, have the potential to achieve multiple development and health impacts, including in HIV, reproductive health and mental health. For this reason, it is important that programme funds seek to achieve these synergies, as they provide important opportunities for DFID investments to achieve large returns on investment.

9.0 IMPROVE POLICY COHERENCE ACROSS WHITEHALL AND THE WIDER UK GOVERNMENT

9.1 As noted in the testimony of ActionAID, there are a number of governmental processes that address the UK's work on VAWG, including:

1. The Cross Government Violence against Women and Girls Strategy (Home Office).
2. The DFID Gender Strategy.
3. The National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security (FCO).
4. The Building Stability Overseas Strategy (FCO).
5. The Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (FCO).

9.2 Policy coherence among these various initiatives should be strengthened, in order to achieve greater impact and ensure that opportunities to advance women's rights and address VAWG more broadly are not missed. A case in point is the FCO's recent project on sexual violence in conflict. While attention to violence

by the FCO is welcome, this initiative is needlessly narrow and threatens to squander important political capital at the G-8 by focusing exclusively on investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of sexual violence in war. Various organisations, including GVHC and the members of GADNET, have pushed for a broader agenda focused on comprehensive efforts to support survivors of violence and to prevent violence from happening in the first place.

9.3 To better align agendas, the UK government should ensure that the Ministerial Champion on Violence Against Women and Girls Overseas has the access, authority and resources to drive the international section of the cross-government strategy forward across all government departments, especially among the FCO, DFID and MoD.

10. RECOGNIZE AND MAINTAIN THE HISTORICAL LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS IN EFFORTS TO COMBAT VAWG

10.1 Until recently, small women's organisations have been virtually the only actors willing to champion the cause of VAWG. They have deep experience with the issue that should be valued and further cultivated. New opportunities for funding have begun to attract more mainstream development actors, some with little understanding of gender-based violence. In crafting its request for proposals and funding schemes, DFID needs to recognise the danger that small civil society groups are least able to compete for large grants, but have the largest expertise. For this reason, DFID should ring fence some funding for women's rights organisations, and prioritise applicants that have a demonstrated track record working effectively on women's issues.

February 2013

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Written evidence submitted by Marie Stopes International

BACKGROUND

1. Marie Stopes International (MSI) is one of the world's largest family planning and reproductive health organisations. For over 35 years women have trusted MSI to provide them with a full range of quality reproductive choices. Today MSI delivers quality family planning and reproductive health services to poor and underserved women in 40 countries, focusing on services that deliver impact, choice, equity and quality.

2. Ensuring access and fulfilment of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is a key strategy to address violence, and to support women and girls who have experienced violence. Violence profoundly limits women's ability to manage and control their SRHR. It can expose women to unwanted and high-risk pregnancies, unsafe abortion, STIs (including HIV) and long term gynaecological and psychological problems.⁵⁹ Clinical services are therefore an essential—yet frequently overlooked—component of a comprehensive response to addressing VAWG.

⁵⁹ A recent study at the University of California-Davis (UC-D) found that about 20% of young women had suffered "reproductive coercion." Reproductive coercion is behaviour that interferes with a person's ability to control their reproductive life such as intentionally exposing a partner to a sexually transmitted infection (STIs), intentionally interfering with birth control or threatening violence if a partner does not comply with their wishes regarding contraception or the decision to terminate or continue a pregnancy.

3. Millions of women around the world lack access to reproductive services, information and choice. This undermines women's educational and economic equality, and perpetuates violence and discrimination. Without reproductive healthcare and choices women's ability to complete education or to be active in income generation and political roles can be severely undermined. Family planning initiatives based on informed choice empower women and transform their position—enabling women to more effectively tackle violence in their families, communities and society.

4. MSI welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this critical inquiry. MSI would like to draw particular attention to the following recommendation:

Mainstream SRHR within all programmes tackling VAWG—to provide comprehensive, affordable and non-discriminatory support services for women who have experienced rape or sexual abuse. Medical interventions include emergency contraception, prevention and treatment of STIs including HIV, and treatment of injuries. Women who choose not to continue with a pregnancy that has resulted from rape should, where legal, be able to access safe abortion services quickly and confidentially.

What should DFID continue doing?

5. Champion VAWG as a foreign and development policy priority and show international leadership in building recognition that clinical services are an essential component of a comprehensive response.

6. Maintain the UK's leadership and commitment to reproductive maternal and new born health. For example DFID's role in the FP2020 Summit and prioritising reproductive health throughout its policies and programmes. *Reproductive, maternal and new born health are expected to account for more than 60% of DFID's global health funding this year supporting lifesaving programmes and setting a strong precedent for other donors.*⁶⁰

7. Encourage other donors, institutions and national governments to incorporate SRHR issues when framing a comprehensive agenda to address VAWG. DFID have developed a robust theory of change that supports a raft of policy instruments and funding mechanisms, reflecting best practice. In an increasingly complex international environment DFID can play a crucial role in encouraging other stakeholders to address VAWG through co-ordination, technical assistance and developing joint initiatives.

What should DFID do more of?

8. Mainstream SRHR within programmes tackling VAWG:

- Providing comprehensive, affordable and non-discriminatory support services for women who have experienced rape or sexual abuse. Medical interventions include emergency contraception, prevention and treatment of STIs including HIV, and treatment of injuries. Women who choose not to continue with a pregnancy that has resulted from rape should where legal be able to access safe abortion services quickly and confidentially. Psychosocial, legal and economic support should also be provided.
- Tackling the specific barriers that girls and young women face in controlling their reproductive health including discrimination and social stigma, lack of confidentiality, and policy restrictions.

9. Support governments to develop their capacity for quality assurance and contracting out SRHR services to non-state providers. Contracting non-state providers, just as the NHS contracts with MSI and with other dedicated specialists in the UK can support health systems to rapidly scale up capacity.

10. Take a cross sector approach to integrate VAWG within all programmes including health, HIV prevention, education, governance and conflict, and humanitarian response. For example:

- **Health:** The health sector is uniquely placed to tackle VAWG, particularly through reproductive health services, which most women will access at some point in their lives. Many providers see and treat (knowingly or not) millions of women and girls living in violent relationships or at risk from violence. Reproductive health services can be entry points for identifying and supporting vulnerable women, and for delivering referral or support services. More needs to be done to ensure that health providers have the awareness and the training to identify violence as the underlying cause of women's health problems, particularly where other services for protection are not available. Family planning services involving male partners are an opportunity to positively influence relationships, change attitudes and prevent violence.

Rates of morbidity and mortality from unsafe abortion are disproportionately high among poor and rural women, therefore equitable access to family planning services and where legal safe abortion should be emphasised in all health policies and programmes.

⁶⁰ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2013/jan/11/aid-debt-uk-coalition-government>

- The health sector can also play a key role in accessing justice for survivors of violence. The testimony from a professional health worker that a woman's injuries are consistent with charges of assault or sexual abuse is often necessary to secure a conviction in court. In many developing countries however, this testimony is not admissible as evidence unless provided by a qualified doctor, excluding evidence from nurses and midwives. The chronic shortage of doctors in developing countries, especially in rural areas, fragile states and humanitarian settings, can therefore make prosecution impossible. DFID should generate greater awareness of this issue and work with other donors and national governments to ensure that the professional assessment of injuries by nurses, midwives and other suitably qualified health workers are admissible as evidence in courts of law in cases of VAWG.
- **Education:** The majority of young people, particularly girls lack the information and resources they need to control their reproductive health and to make informed choices about sex and contraceptives—this puts them at risk of violence. Education programmes should address sex education, SRHR and the specific barriers that young people face in accessing reproductive health.

11. Ensure commitments made at the London Summit on Family Planning by national governments and donors are honoured and implemented so that 120 million new users can access family planning where unmet need is highest, including West and Central Africa. *There are currently an estimated 215 million women with an unmet need for family planning⁶¹ and at current rates of service expansion it will take another 500 years for women in parts of western and central Africa to access the contraception they want.⁶²*

12. Adopt a clear and effective cross-government strategy—across all development, conflict, security and humanitarian agendas—and mobilise resources to deliver on commitments made.

- Revise the international section of the cross-government strategy on VAWG, to align it with DFID's new Theory of Change for Tackling VAWG.
- Ensure that the Ministerial Champion on VAWG Overseas has access, authority and resources to drive this strategy forward across government, especially across the FCO, DFID and MoD, and reports annually to parliament on progress.

The extent to which DFID's humanitarian responses address VAWG

In recent years, the international community has agreed that fragile states must be given more predictable support as poverty and death levels are so high. This consensus has yet to translate into committed, wholesale action.⁶³

13. Women are disproportionately affected by violence in conflict and humanitarian crisis. Reproductive health services are often forgotten or seen as irrelevant or 'non-life saving' in humanitarian emergencies, leaving refugees, IDPs, and other affected groups without access. The need to control one's own fertility does not diminish in emergencies—maternal and neonatal mortality and levels of sexual violence are far higher in fragile states and emergency settings. Over 50% of the 536,000 maternal deaths each year occur in fragile states where the average health spend is just \$9 per person per year.⁶⁴ From the onset of an emergency, the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP)⁶⁵ for reproductive health in emergencies should be implemented and as soon as the situation allows comprehensive reproductive health services should be provided.⁶⁶

DFID have developed a robust and comprehensive position paper on safe and unsafe abortion in developing countries.⁶⁷ Rape and forced pregnancy as a tactic in conflicts have been documented in a number of places including Sierra Leone, Somalia and Darfur. In cases where women have been raped in armed conflict UK funded medical care should include access to safe abortion and post abortion care services, in compliance with international law. When UK and USAID funding is pooled together which is often the case, for example to the UNHCR in South Sudan, clinics are unable to provide lifesaving services due to USAID restrictions.

14. Recommendations:

- Develop mechanisms to ensure that UK aid assistance in conflict and humanitarian settings can be used to provide safe abortion services. For example ring fence funds within each aid programme to organisations that are better placed to provide these services.
- Work with the UN humanitarian coordination system, including the Consolidated Appeals Process, to ensure greater priority is given to humanitarian programmes that enable the provision of SRHR services.

⁶¹ Guttmacher Institute Adding it up 2012—<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/AIU-2012-estimates.pdf>

⁶² Marie Stopes International estimates 2012—<http://www.mariestopes.org/data-research/graphs/finishing-family-planning-revolution>

⁶³ Merlin, All Mothers Matter, Investing in health workers to save lives in fragile states—www.healthandfragilestates.org/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=51&Itemid=38

⁶⁴ As above

⁶⁵ Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health in Crisis Situations—<http://misp.rhrc.org/>

⁶⁶ Inter-agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings—http://www.iawg.net/resources/field_manual.html

⁶⁷ <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/pol-2010-safe-unsafe-abort-dev-cntries.pdf>

- Ensure that SRHR is adequately integrated into the UK’s aid and assistance during all conflict and humanitarian responses. Work with the FCO Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative to mainstream SRHR into all policies and programmes.
- Earmark money for SRHR programmes within all DFID country budgets to fragile states (eg Afghanistan).
- Influence and support other humanitarian actors to develop their capacity to deliver SRHR for GBV survivors.
- Build greater recognition that the ability to prosecute perpetrators of VAWG in humanitarian settings is severely limited when the professional assessment of mid-level health workers, such as midwives and nurses, is not permitted to be used as evidence.

Leadership around the 57th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the post-2015 agenda

15. MSI welcomes the leadership and co-ordination role that DFID has taken to ensure that the CSW has strong agreed conclusions to protect existing agreed human rights commitments and is focused on prevention and access to comprehensive services. MSI recommends the inclusion of a specific target on ending VAWG and securing universal SRHR as part of a dedicated standalone goal on gender equality within the post-2015 framework.

January 2013

Written evidence submitted by Julia Lalla-Maharajh, Founder & CEO, Orchid Project

SUMMARY

- Orchid Project is a UK-based NGO working to end female genital cutting around the world. Orchid Project has compiled evidence for this inquiry into DFID’s work on violence against women and girls (VAWG) with a particular focus on our area of knowledge and expertise, female genital cutting (FGC).
- In the two years since Orchid Project set up we have seen progress on addressing FGC, with an explicit commitment to setting up a large FGC abandonment programme. Prior to this, DFID has not focused on FGC at all.
- We welcome DFID’s theory of change for tackling VAWG, especially as this was developed in conjunction with the Gender and Development Network of which we are a member. This collaborative exercise demonstrated DFID’s appreciation of the expertise of civil society organisations in tackling VAWG and resulted in a strong theory of change.
- Orchid Project strongly believes in taking a social norm-based approach to ending female genital cutting, something which is also reflected in DFID’s theory of change, and which DFID is considering in the development of a new programme tackling FGC.
- The leadership by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Lynne Featherstone MP in her role as International Champion for Ending Violence against Women and Girls Overseas has been productive. She has ensured that ending violence against women and girls is on the Government’s agenda.
- Concerning FGC in particular, the Minister’s experiences in that role and in her prior role as Equalities Minister at the Home Office have meant she is in a strong position to champion this in her current Ministerial role at DFID.
- We look forward to welcoming the Department for International Development’s new work and resources for ending female genital cutting and will continue to support the Department in developing this.

1. *Orchid Project*

1.1 Orchid Project is a UK-registered charity working to end female genital cutting around the world. We do this in three ways. We partner with organisations that deliver a sustainable, proven end to female genital cutting, we communicate the potential for an end to FGC, raising awareness about how, why and where female genital cutting happens, and we advocate to ensure stakeholders prioritise an end to FGC

1.2 Orchid Project has developed written evidence for the International Development Select Committee to consider in its inquiry into the DFID’s work on violence against women and girls (VAWG), specifically addressing female genital cutting

1.3 Female genital cutting is a form of violence against women and girls because it means “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons”⁶⁸

⁶⁸ WHO. (2008). Eliminating Female genital mutilation: An interagency statement (OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO).

1.4 FGC is a violent act upon a girls' body, although it is not performed with violent intent. Girls who are cut may suffer from infection including septicaemia, tetanus and septic shock which can be fatal. The highest levels of infant and maternal mortality occur in FGC-practising countries, with cut women more likely to die during childbirth, or deliver stillbirths due to obstructed labour, and to experience obstetric fistula

1.5 There are different types of FGC which vary from partial or total removal of a girl's clitoris and/or clitoral hood, to removal of the labia minora and/or majora, through to the 'sealing' of the entrance to the vagina (infibulation).

2. The extent to which DFID programmes on VAWG support the right policy instruments and reflect best practice, as outlined in DFID's Theory of Change and related guidance

2.1 Orchid Project understands that DFID is in the process of developing a programme to support work to end female genital cutting around the world

2.2 Our interaction with this process has shown us that DFID is largely following the best practice outlined in the VAWG Theory of Change, as DFID has a strong understanding of social norm change in the context of VAWG. As FGC is a social norm, we are hopeful that this will be factored into the development of DFID's FGC programme.

3. The effectiveness of DFID funding mechanisms for VAWG and the systems in place to measure their impact

3.1 We are currently unable to comment regarding DFID funding on FGC as neither the fund nor how it will be structured has yet been announced

3.2 Depending on the indicators for the programme, it may be difficult for DFID to measure the impact of the FGC programme, given that we know social change can take up to three years to take effect at the community level. It is hard to measure social norm change, and it may be difficult for DFID to measure the impact of this programme using a traditional logical framework approach. DFID needs to be mindful of this, as with FGC it can take a long time for real, sustainable, lasting change to show in data collected.

4. Co-ordination and integration of DFID's work on VAWG with the other priority areas outlined in DFID's Gender Vision, and with other areas of DFID programming (eg governance and conflict, health and education, economic growth, humanitarian disasters and emergencies)

4.1 We are pleased that DFID's approach to working on FGC includes improving DFID's understanding of social norm theory, as FGC is a social norm. As stated in DFID's own theory of change for ending VAWG, much violence against women and girls is socially condoned, and there are also many other areas of DFID's work around the world where an understanding and integration of social norm theory could aid progress

4.2 We have been pleased to see that DFID is working widely across internal teams and that the issue of FGC is being integrated across various teams. We have spent a lot of time working with Social Development Advisers from the health team and the Africa team. However, FGC also fits within the VAWG team in CHASE. The research team within DFID is also prioritising much-needed research on FGC

4.3 Orchid Project was invited by DFID to present, on the subject of social norm theory, to a group of 80 Social Development Advisers. This confirmed the understanding DFID has of the cross-cutting nature of VAWG issues including FGC, as many of the staff present had no direct link with FGC work. There were also a number of DFID representatives from country offices who were present

4.4 In general, in the past 18 months DFID seems to have taken a greater interest in working on ending and preventing VAWG, as demonstrated by the development of the theory of change, which is heartening as it shows DFID understands the widespread impacts of VAWG across the lives of women, children, and men around the world.

5. Strength of UK leadership role internationally on VAWG, including the effectiveness of DFID's work with multilateral partners and the UK's International Champion for VAWG position

5.1 DFID's leadership on female genital cutting has grown and become significant. Orchid Project first met with DFID in July 2011, and since then we have seen a growth of interest in the subject from within the department, from both civil servants and politicians

5.2 In 2011–2012, former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Stephen O'Brien was an excellent advocate for ending FGC, visiting our partner Tostan while in Senegal on a visit, and speaking openly about FGC at our event on International Day against FGC, February 6 2012

5.3 When Lynne Featherstone joined the department in this role in autumn 2012, she brought with her knowledge of VAWG and FGC from her Ministerial Champion role, and also significantly her experiences from the Home Office

5.4 We believe that Justine Greening understands the importance and significance of DFID working on VAWG, although cannot evidence this

5.5 In December 2011 DFID attended the Donor's Working Group (DWG) on female genital mutilation/cutting. The DWG provides an opportunity for donors to meet on an annual basis and to collaborate on work aimed at ending FGC. 2011 was the first time DFID attended this meeting

5.6 In 2012, DFID's interest in and commitment to FGC grew and in December 2012 DFID hosted the DWG in London. From our perspective this was huge progress and really showed other donors, as well as NGOs invited to part of the conference, that DFID is taking ending FGC seriously—in fact, moving into the leadership role as host of the conference and in developing a specific FGC abandonment programme

5.7 The role of Ministerial Champion for ending VAWG overseas was created to 'provide policy coherence and co-ordination across Whitehall departments'. It has been useful to have this role as a figurehead for the past two years, providing leadership in certain areas, and Orchid Project has certainly benefited from the Minister's interest in VAWG issues (in this capacity Lynne Featherstone sponsored an event for us at the House of Commons for International Day against FGC in 2012). However, it does not always seem as though the role has the respect it should have across Whitehall, and it would be good to see if this can be improved

5.8 Lynne Featherstone recently met with 7 CEOs of NGOs for an informal roundtable discussion, which was a very useful forum.

6. *Cross-governmental working within the UK, particularly co-operation between DFID, the FCO and the MOD on the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and the UK Government National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security*

6.1 Regarding female genital cutting we have seen some evidence of strong cross-governmental working, with DFID staff attending the cross-governmental FGM Forum (hosted by the Home Office), and Home Office staff attending lunchtime seminars on the topic of FGC which were held at DFID. Female genital cutting is a topic where this sort of joined-up working is necessary, as DFID's response does not exist in a vacuum, and with increasing FGC-practising communities in the UK, it is vital that the different government departments work together

6.2 Her Majesty's Government's VAWG action plan from 2011 and updated in 2012 could have greater level of DFID integration and the update in 2013 should seek to improve this

6.3 We are pleased that the Minister, Lynne Featherstone will be speaking at our event on 6 February at the House of Lords. In addition, Jeremy Browne, Home Office Minister of State, will speak at the same event, underlining commitment to cross-departmental work on this agenda.

7. *Key events in 2013: the 57th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March, and the G8 Summit in June*

7.1 It seems that there is heightened interest in CSW this year, given the theme of prevention and elimination of VAWG. By participating in CSW alongside the GEO and FCO, DFID demonstrates its commitment to ending VAWG around the world

7.2 We understand that Lynne Featherstone will be attending CSW along with Helen Grant, and that DFID may also send a delegation of civil servants. All of this is positive news and we hope that this is only the start of DFID's participation in CSW, and that in future years there will be a greater DFID presence

7.3 Given DFID's forward-thinking theory of change for tackling VAWG, CSW presents an ideal opportunity to share this thinking with other governments and for DFID to lead the way with a social norm-based approach to ending VAWG

7.4 It is a shame that DFID is not hosting a side event but as this is the first real year of DFID participation, this is understandable.

8. *VAWG within the post-2015 development goals*

8.1 We are pleased that the UK is at the forefront of the discussions regarding the post-2015 development goals, and believe DFID should support a 'gender equality' goal, with a 'reducing VAWG' sub-heading, and an indicator related to FGC prevalence and decrease thereof

January 2013

Written evidence submitted by Oxfam

PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE INITIATIVE

1. Oxfam warmly welcomes the UK Government's focus on tackling gender-based violence (GBV). However, a cross-government approach is needed beyond a focus on prosecution. Long term aid and diplomacy has a crucial role to play including:

- a. Scaling up access to safe, confidential health services for survivors of sexual violence
- b. Building police and security services with a capacity to tackle gender-based violence.
- c. Supporting grass roots organisations to tackle the attitudes and behaviours that sustain gender-based violence, including sexual violence.
- d. Featuring the issue of human rights prominently in UK diplomacy
- e. Championing a place at the table for women in peace negotiations
- f. Support for strengthening the draft Arms Trade Treaty.

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

2. We urge the UK government to play a leading role at the upcoming meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women and support the call for the development of an international implementation plan to end violence against women (VAW).

POST-2015

3. The post-2015 framework should have a specific goal to achieve gender equality, in addition to mainstreaming gender equality across the targets and indicators of other goals.

4. VAW/GBV is widely recognised as a critical issue that is absent in the current Millennium Development Goal (MDG) framework.

5. It is essential that the post-2015 framework builds on women's rights instruments and frameworks as well as on the analysis and proposals from the women's movement (which requires designated space and funding for women's rights groups in the post-2015 consultation process).

AFGHANISTAN

6. The UK Government should comprehensively promote women's rights in the next Department for International Development Afghanistan Operational Plan, including more effective support to ensure substantial, progressive implementation of the elimination of VAW law. The UK Government should also accelerate the scale up of financial and technical support for promoting women's rights and the elimination of VAW within its current Tawanmandi civil society support programme.

DFID'S STRATEGIC VISION FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN

7. Greater focus should be given to the importance of the 'enabling environment' in terms of locally-led action and participation by women's rights organisations.

Oxfam GB welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee's inquiry on violence against women and girls. Oxfam works with partners around the world to find lasting solutions to poverty and injustice. As part of Oxfam International, a confederation of more than 17 Oxfam affiliates around the world we work in more than 90 countries and respond to an average of 30 emergency situations each year. Oxfam believes that people are entitled to five fundamental rights: a sustainable livelihood; basic social services; life and security; to be heard; and equity. We work to support people in realising these rights and fight poverty and suffering through campaigning, long-term development work, and emergency response.

Oxfam puts women and girls at the heart of everything we do. For example Oxfam's Raising Her Voice programme has been working with 45 Raising Her Voice partners and 450 coalition member organisations in 17 countries worldwide to develop strategic, explicit projects to challenge and change women's political exclusion and experiences of violence.

UK Government Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative

1. In May 2012, the Foreign Secretary announced that the UK Government would prioritise the critical issue of tackling sexual violence in conflict by establishing a specialist team and raising this issue at the G8.

2. Oxfam warmly welcomes the UK Government's focus on tackling this critical issue. Tackling the culture of impunity for these crimes through prosecution and comprehensive justice for survivors is essential. However this must be accompanied by a cross-government approach, including from the Department for International Development. Long term aid has a crucial role to play in ensuring the initiative can help prevent sexual and gender-based violence over the longer term and ensure survivors have access to services in conflict-affected countries.

3. An active role for UK aid should include:
 - a. Scaling up access to safe, confidential health services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence which respond to psychological trauma and provide emergency reproductive health services. These also need to be appropriate for men as survivors of sexual violence.
 - b. Building police and security services with a capacity to tackle gender-based violence through better training and awareness of the issue and legislation, as well as through more women recruits.
 - c. Supporting grass roots organisations to tackle the attitudes and behaviours that sustain gender-based violence, including sexual violence. Prevention of sexual and gender-based violence is most often successful where initiatives address root causes of violence and discrimination and promote women's empowerment and gender equality. Challenging attitudes and beliefs around gender-based violence is critical alongside the implementation of effective legislation against gender-based violence.
4. UK diplomacy on this issue should include:
 - d. The issue of human rights featuring prominently in UK diplomacy at international and country level with specific attention to gender-based violence, including sexual violence.
 - e. Championing a place at the table for women in peace negotiations in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to help ensure that gender-based violence is recognised as part of any peace process and women's rights are sustained over the long term.
 - f. Support for strengthening the draft Arms Trade Treaty so that the sale of arms is explicitly prohibited if they are likely to be used to perpetrate or facilitate gender-based violence.

Commission on the Status of Women

5. The topic of the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women is the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.⁶⁹ Oxfam urges the UK Government to show leadership at the upcoming meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women and support the call at the UN-convened Expert Group meeting on the CSW in September 2012 for the development of an international implementation plan to end violence against women.⁷⁰

Post-2015

6. The post-2015 framework should have a specific goal to achieve gender equality, in addition to mainstreaming gender equality across the targets and indicators of other goals. VAW/GBV is widely recognised as a critical issue that is absent in the current MDG framework. The Gender and Development Network have highlighted VAW as a priority issue area that could be addressed as part of a specific goal on gender equality or as a target area within other goals in the post-2015 framework.⁷¹

7. It is vital that space and funding is designated for consultation with women's rights groups in the broader post-2015 consultation process. The analysis and proposals from the women's movements must form the basis for discussions on the content of both a stand-alone goal on gender equality and targets and indicators across the framework.

8. It is essential that the post-2015 framework builds on women's rights instruments and frameworks such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, and United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960, as well as relevant regional frameworks.

9. Targets across the framework must be transformative, accompanied by sex-disaggregated indicators, so that they reflect a lasting change in the power and choices women have over their own lives and tackle the root causes of inequality. Targets must genuinely reflect the barriers women and girls face eg to access and complete quality primary and secondary education. Indicators, targets and goals should be based on a framework which effectively promotes gender equality, and encourage the collection of gender-disaggregated data on the new goals where it is not currently available.

Afghanistan

10. We welcome recent DFID programme support for women's rights in Afghanistan. However, additional focus on women's rights, and greater cross-government coordination, is needed in order to consolidate progress. Efforts to improve the enforcement of women's rights and protective laws are severely hampered by social and practical barriers that women face in reporting crimes, which encourages a culture of fear and impunity.

11. The UK Government should comprehensively promote women's rights in the next DFID operational plan, including more effective support to ensure substantial, progressive implementation of the elimination of VAW law. DFID and other UK government departments should increase advocacy and practical support for

⁶⁹ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/57sess.htm>

⁷⁰ <http://www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Report-of-the-EGM-on-Prevention-of-Violence-against-Women-and-Girls.pdf>; <http://www.unwomen.org/events/59/expert-group-meeting-prevention-of-violence-against-women-and-girls/>

⁷¹ See further, Gender and Development Network, 2012 <http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk/gadn-post-2015-report/>

more effective recruitment, retention and participation of female police officers and a more responsive judiciary. The UK Government should also accelerate the scale up of financial and technical support for promoting women's rights and the elimination of VAW within its current Tawanmandi civil society support programme.

DFID's Strategic vision for Girls and Women

12. The vision identifies four pillars:
- a. Delaying first pregnancy and supporting safe childbirth
 - b. Getting economic assets directly to women
 - c. Getting girls through secondary school
 - d. Preventing violence

13. The vision separately acknowledges that progress across the four pillars depends on improvements in the 'enabling environment', including locally-led action by women's movements for social change. Yet, while the four pillars each have targets, the enabling environment is not linked to concrete targets.

14. The VAW pillar in the vision commits to "work to support behaviour change, by challenging social attitudes and perceptions". In order to achieve this, further emphasis should be given to locally-led action and participation. In addition the vision should further recognise the critical role of women's rights organisations in holding service providers and government (at all levels) to account for policy and resource commitments to VAW/GBV and for the provision and quality of support services.

15. Oxfam's Raising Her Voice programme has been working with 45 Raising Her Voice partners and 450 coalition member organisations in 17 countries worldwide to develop strategic, explicit projects to challenge and change women's political exclusion and experiences of violence. In Bolivia for example, local partners, women's movements and Oxfam campaigners have lobbied successfully for a Political Violence Law which explicitly seeks to protect women candidates from the threat and reality of political violence.

16. In Nepal, 81 Raising Her Voice community discussion groups (CDC) have enabled nearly 2,000 women to explore and challenge the cultural acceptability of VAW/GBV and they have begun to gain the support of their families and local men. 88% of participants in a 2012 control group final evaluation study reported greater awareness of the Domestic Violence Act—with 90% actively involved in efforts to prevent it—compared to 22% awareness and 0% activism in villages that hadn't been involved in the project. In the 3 year project period CDC members from 81 villages supported 554 cases of VAW and referred a further 448 to the police, courts and village development committee and other bodies.

January 2013

Written evidence submitted by Restored

INTRODUCTION

1. **Restored** is an international Christian alliance working to transform relationships and end violence against women (VAW). We aim to raise awareness of male violence and equip the church to stop it happening, both at home and in the wider world.

2. A local church is well placed to offer safety and support. We can help congregations to respond to VAW and provide a link to the professional services available. We have a targeted programme aimed at men and boys called 'First Man Standing'. As an international alliance of Christians, we can also speak up on the global stage. We have 62 member organisations around the world, including Christian Aid, Mothers Union and Tearfund in the UK.

3. We want the church to be a place where women and men work together to restore relationships and end the fear of violence.

SUMMARY

4. The main issues that we wish to highlight to the committee are:
- a. The importance of churches and other faith groups in ending violence against women
 - b. The centrality and importance of cultural change
 - c. Working with men and boys
 - d. Implementing and resourcing international instruments signed and ratified by the government
 - e. Ending impunity for perpetrators of violence
 - f. Addressing the intersecting inequalities that can determine a women's vulnerability to violence
 - g. Sustainable provision of services

KEY POINTS

a) *The importance of churches and other faith groups in ending violence against women*

5. Two billion people around the world are members of Christian churches. In many communities, such as in many parts of South Sudan, the church is the dominant, or only, form of civil society organisation. Churches have a key role in shaping attitudes and beliefs which inform behavioural choices alongside providing practical support and guidance to those affected by violence. In the UK, churches have been central to movements for change including Make Poverty History and the IF campaign.

An Example of this is HEAL Africa, a member of Restored, working in GOMA in the Democratic Republic of Congo. HEAL Africa provide a safe refuge and space for survivors of sexual violence to gain holistic healing from their trauma. Not only does the hospital provide fistula repair, counselling and spiritual care, it works with the women to provide training and skills that enable them to reintegrate back into society. They also work with traditional leaders in changing cultural norms.

6. Working with churches is particularly important because some strands of Christian teaching have been used to justify abuse based on inequality between men and women. Restored has developed a “Church Pack” which includes examples of different ways in which the Bible has been misinterpreted to justify abuse of women and provides alternative interpretations which demonstrate God’s original intention of equality between men and women. The church pack also gives practical guidance to churches as to how to respond to those disclosing violence and how to link more effectively with local services. Churches provide extensive teaching and counselling for young people, in marriage preparation, amongst others, where teaching on preventing abuse against women would be appropriate.

7. Restored believes that churches can be part of the solution to violence against women both within their own congregations and in the wider communities of which they are a part. Christians are able to draw on the example of Jesus Christ who demonstrated a non-abusive masculinity and modelled respect for all people, both women and men. Restored in conjunction with the White Ribbon Campaign a resource that demonstrated that violence against women is inconsistent with Christian teaching.

8. Restored is part of the “We Will Speak Out” coalition, which is an example of how churches and Christian organisations can be mobilised to respond to sexual violence, particularly in conflict-affected countries. It is supported by academic research (<http://tilz.tearfund.org/Topics/HIV+and+AIDS/Silent+No+More+Report+and+Event.htm>). Initially focussed on DRC, Liberia, Rwanda and Burundi, senior church leaders are now taking forward local campaigns to change their societies. Restored is also working with partners in Latin America to develop ideas on how machismo culture and domestic violence can be challenged by churches across the continent.

9. *Restored will be participating in the UNSCSW in March and will host a side event with the Mothers Union on ‘Churches ending violence against women: a relationship based approach’.*

10. In all our work we seek to draw in an increasing network of churches and Christian organisations around the world to see an end to violence against women. Any comprehensive response to violence against women must engage with faith leaders and faith communities, both to challenge unhelpful teaching and practice and to harness the potential for these communities to be force for good in preventing and ending VAW.

b) *The centrality of cultural change*

11. Violence against women as a cause and consequence of gender inequality and social stereotypes regarding gender. Deep-seated patriarchal beliefs and unequal gender power relations can lead to violence against women. At the moment inadequate attention is given to the issue of cultural change in preventing VAW. In many societies abusive behaviour against women is normalised and acceptable. Article 5 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) states that Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

- a. to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;
- b. to ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

12. This element of CEDAW has been consistently under-emphasised and under resourced in government and donor-financed development programmes. A broad based approach is needed that draws in the arts, media, journalists and other key influencers in society to address the issues of gender stereotyping and gender inequality. Changing attitudes requires long term investment. It also involves exposing stereotypes and exploring the effect of constructions of masculinity and the link between sexualised images and VAW. For example, the socialisation of boys to use violence and the social acceptance of violence as a way of resolving conflicts. Inequality and VAW are produced and reproduced by a variety of factors, actors, institutions and policies. Work within religious institutions, such as churches, to disseminate a message of equality, provide

teaching on healthy relationships and condemn violence, is essential in the effort to change beliefs held within society. Changing culture also requires challenging commercial interests that promote the multi-billion dollar pornography industry that requires abuse of women and men in its production, and promotes abuse in its consumption. A multi-dimensional approach is needed that includes tightening of the legal system, education and cultural change. At the heart of this is the belief systems on which societies are based some of which are attributable to religious teaching.

c) The need to work with men and boys

13. Violence against women is a human issue. We see work with men in two main parts. Firstly, we need to work with men in general to challenge stereotypes and raise awareness of violence against women. Restored has a campaign called “First Man Standing” which challenges men to i) Respect all women; ii) Challenge other men and iii) sign up to the White Ribbon pledge “never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women”. By working in this way, which can be contextualised with any given society, we believe that attitudes in society can be changed, narrowing down the space in which abuse is regarded as acceptable.

14. Secondly we need to work with perpetrators of violence, ensuring that they are held accountable and face consequences for their actions and providing options for those who want to change. We are keen to see more research on issues to fill the current evidence gap on what motivates a perpetrator to change. Many societies around the world fail on comprehensively engaging with perpetrators of violence, and there is need to strengthen justice systems at all levels of society, and to increase provision and access to perpetrator programmes. Such work should be additional to and not at the expense of front-line support to women affected by violence.

d) Implementing and resourcing international instruments signed and ratified by the government

15. We are grateful that the UK government has signed, and in some case ratified various international instruments that state international commitments on gender equality and ending to violence against women. We encourage the government to ensure that these international instruments are reflected in the responses to violence against women to their fullest extent and are sustainably resourced to bring about the intended change and impact. These include, amongst others, The Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW especially article 5.

e) Ending impunity for perpetrators of abuse.

16. State impunity contributes to the continuum of VAW. Lack of action on violence against women at national and international levels encourages the use of violence since perpetrators assume they can act with impunity. Female survivors of violence lack access to justice with few avenues for redress or accountability. If victims do not have confidence that the justice system will provide them with support, safety and justice then they are unlikely to make the decision to report an offence. This confidence will be affected by women’s experience of the criminal justice system as well as measures of performance such as the low conviction rates (particularly for rape). Priorities should therefore include law enforcement, investigation and punishment of perpetrators.

17. Restored welcomes the Foreign Secretaries Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) that has ending impunity at the heart of the programme. It currently is focussed on conflict regions. Restored would recommend that this programme not only is expanded, includes local capacity development to ensure sustainability, gains international support from other governments beyond the G8, but also has sustainable investment beyond 2013 to bring about the desired results.

f) Addressing the intersecting inequalities that can determine a women’s vulnerability to violence

18. Women can experience violence in very different ways depending on their age, class, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious belief, disabilities and migratory status. Addressing VAW requires an understanding of how different layers of discrimination interact; a response without these lenses or without the integration of policies that approach women as a diverse group will not address the needs of all women who suffer violence. The government should consider how inequalities based on racism, ethnic background, migration status, language, disability, religious beliefs, and poverty determine women’s vulnerability to violence.

g) Sustainable Provision of Services

19. Women survivors of violence require access to specialist support. However, this specialist support is frequently under-valued, under-resourced, and in some cases, non-existent, resulting in women not being able to access this crucial support. Women face stigma and social disapproval when asking for help when experiencing violence. Allocation of long term financial resources to civil society organisations, churches and national institutions working for gender equality and tackling VAW is vital. This should include funding for shelters, refuges and financial provision for emergency support for women at risk and wanting to escape from violent families/environment. Women should have access to a diverse range of provision, across all forms of violence which is responsive to the different needs of women (such as dedicated services for ethnic minority

women, disabled women etc.). Such a diverse range of services is necessary to ensure multiple routes to support as well as meeting the specific needs of women.

DFID work

20. We very much welcome the broad range of recent Government initiatives in this area, including the Foreign Secretary's PSVI on sexual violence. We also welcome DFID's theory of change, which provides a benchmark for the sector. We feel that it needs further inputs on engaging with faith groups, especially churches, and exploring the individual journeys of both men and women.

21. DFID has also taken steps forward in developing work with faith groups and has recognised the need to increase the "faith-literacy" of its own staff. Restored welcomes the publication of DFID's policy on engaging with faith (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/faith-partnership-principles.pdf>) and encourages the wide dissemination and awareness of this document among government and civil society.

CONCLUSION

22. Restored's vision is to see communities free from violence and the fear of violence against women. We are working to take the principles of engaging with churches and men and see them contextualised throughout the world directly challenging any justification of violence against women.

We would be happy to provide further information and oral evidence to the Committee if required.

29 January 2013

Written evidence submitted by Saferworld

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: THE G8 AND BEYOND

SUMMARY

Events in 2013, including the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the UK's G8 presidency, present important opportunities for UK leadership on tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG). However, it will be important that the UK Government also look beyond these events and take on a leadership role in tackling VAWG in the longer term.

The following submission from Saferworld, a conflict prevention and peacebuilding organisation, focuses on several key areas of this inquiry, including:

- coordination and integration between DFID's work on conflict issues and tackling VAWG
- the relationship between VAWG, conflict, and development
- the UK's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) and its relationship to international initiatives to tackle sexual violence in conflict
- how the UK might use its G8 presidency to promote gender-sensitive security and justice reform and greater implementation of existing commitments on tackling VAWG
- the need for the post-2015 development framework to include commitments on preventing VAWG

Based on the evidence provided in this submission, Saferworld recommends:

- that the UK Government include requirements for gender sensitivity within all guidelines and templates for proposals for programming in conflict-affected and fragile states
- that government support further research into the causal relationship between VAWG and conflict in order to inform conflict prevention policy and practice
- an assessment of the integration of women, peace and security considerations into UK security and justice programming in conflict-affected and fragile states as part of the 2013 review of the *UK National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security (NAP)*
- that the UK champion gender-sensitive security and justice reform as part of the PSVI during its G8 presidency
- that the UK champion the inclusion of a target on preventing VAWG under a stand-alone gender goal as part of the post-2015 development agenda
- that the UK advocate to include commitments to addressing the drivers of conflict as part of the post-2015 development agenda, which would also contribute to addressing VAWG

INTRODUCTION

1. Saferworld welcomes the International Development Committee's inquiry into violence against women and girls (VAWG). Given Saferworld's area of expertise as a conflict prevention and peacebuilding organisation, this submission is focused particularly on VAWG in conflict-affected countries and the relationship between VAWG and conflict.

2. Events in 2013, including the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the UK's G8 presidency, present important opportunities for UK leadership on tackling VAWG. However, it will be important that the UK also look beyond these events and take on a leadership role in tackling VAWG in the longer term.

3. Saferworld believes that DFID's *Theory of change for tackling violence against women and girls*⁷² represents an excellent starting point for taking a holistic, multisectoral approach to preventing and reducing VAWG. Saferworld's expertise on preventing violence against women is based primarily on our work in 20 conflict-affected countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East to improve national and local security and justice systems. Therefore, while this submission places emphasis on security and justice sector reform as a means of tackling violence against women, this represents one aspect of the multisectoral approach which is needed.

Co-ordination and integration of DFID's work on conflict and VAWG

4. The UK Government has committed to mainstreaming a women, peace and security perspective throughout its work in conflict-affected and fragile states. Efforts to address VAWG in conflict settings are only one aspect of the women, peace and security agenda. Making progress on other aspects of this agenda—such as women's participation in peace processes, the inclusion of gender issues in transitional justice processes, and mainstreaming a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations—is also vital to preventing VAWG. While the *UK National Action Plan on 1325 Women, Peace and Security* (NAP)⁷³ has brought about some progress in this area, gender considerations, including the need to address VAWG, are not yet fully mainstreamed throughout the UK's work in conflict-affected countries, particularly those which are not specifically addressed in the NAP. For example, the recently published cross-departmental conflict analysis methodology (Joint Analysis on Conflict and Stability) would benefit from inclusion of a requirement for gender analysis in all conflict analysis.

5. One key means of ensuring that the UK Government's work in conflict-affected and fragile states is gender-sensitive and contributes to preventing VAWG would be to make this a requirement in applications for funding. Requirements for gender sensitivity within the guidelines and templates for proposals, particularly in those areas that relate to the causes of VAWG, could encourage stronger integration of the UK Government's VAWG work within other areas of programming. This should also include areas related to the steps to tackle VAWG identified in DFID's change model.

6. The Arab Partnership Fund provides a good example in this regard, in that funding applications are required to include an explanation of how projects will be made gender-sensitive. Guidelines and templates for proposals in other funding streams, including cross-departmental ones such as the Conflict Pool, could benefit from a similar approach.

The need for research on VAWG and conflict prevention

7. The relationship between violence against women and armed conflict is complex and still not fully understood. Violence against women increases during times of conflict, and may increase even more during the post-conflict period, owing to factors such as conflict-related trauma, firearms being kept in the home and changes in gender roles resulting from the upheaval of conflict situations.⁷⁴

8. Violence against women can trigger armed violence. It can also exacerbate conflict, as recognised in UN Security Council Resolution 1820, which notes that “sexual violence, when used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations, can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security”.⁷⁵

9. However, there is emerging evidence that a high prevalence of violence against women within societies may not just be a trigger but a structural cause or enabling factor for armed conflict and instability at the national level. Recent research has found that countries which have high levels of violence against women and girls (including, for example, domestic violence, female infanticide and sex-selective abortion) are more likely to experience armed conflict than those which do not.⁷⁶ In fact, levels of violence against women were found to be a better predictor of state insecurity than factors such as levels of democracy or national wealth.

10. Various possible explanations exist as to why the normalisation of violence at the micro level may make violence more likely at the national level.⁷⁷ However, the lack of long-term data on violence against women makes causality difficult to establish, and further research is needed to determine the nature of this relationship and its implications for conflict prevention. Saferworld therefore recommends that the government, in line with

⁷² DFID, *A Theory of Change for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls*, Guidance Note 1, (2012).

⁷³ UK Government, *UK National Action Plan on 1325 Women, Peace and Security* (2012).

⁷⁴ See, for example, International Rescue Committee, *Let me not die before my time: domestic violence in West Africa*, (2012).

⁷⁵ UN Security Council, *Resolution 1820* (2008).

⁷⁶ Valerie M. Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, Rose McDermott, and Chad F. Emmett, ‘The Heart of the Matter: the security of women and the security of states’, *International Security*, 33:3, (2009), pp 7–45.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* See also Mary Caprioli, ‘Primed for violence: the role of gender inequality in predicting internal conflict’ in *International Studies Quarterly* (2005) 49:2 pp 161–178.

its commitment to commission research on gender, conflict and violence against women⁷⁸ supports further research on this question to inform conflict prevention policy and practice.

Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI)

11. The UK Government's PSVI is a welcome demonstration of its intention to demonstrate international leadership on preventing VAWG. However, if it is to be effective, this leadership must be exercised in concert with existing multilateral efforts on this issue. Limited consultation with key international actors such as UN Women, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the UN Team of Experts on Sexual Violence in Conflict prior to the launch of the initiative has meant that the PSVI risks duplication. For example, the UK's roster of deployable experts, launched through the PSVI, serves a similar function to UN's Justice Rapid Response roster, which also has the advantage of deploying multilaterally and so avoiding the political difficulties which may make bilateral deployments more difficult. It will be necessary to clarify how the PSVI team of experts will co-ordinate with this mechanism, and it is welcome that UK consultation with UN actors has increased since the PSVI launch.

12. As mentioned above, DFID has elaborated detailed guidance for tackling VAWG, which provides an invaluable resource for the UK Government and others to draw on as it further develops the PSVI. However, while ministers have stated that DFID has an important role to play in the PSVI, the nature of this role has not been articulated. It will be important for the government to articulate that role in order to ensure that this initiative takes advantage of DFID's expertise on tackling VAWG in a long-term, holistic way.

13. The government's decision to use its G8 presidency to obtain commitments by G8 countries to take concrete action on addressing sexual violence in conflict is welcome. Saferworld has advocated for the government to include among these a commitment to ensuring that all security and justice sector reform programming undertaken by G8 countries is gender-sensitive and includes measures to tackle VAWG.⁷⁹ Saferworld believes that developing capable, accountable and responsive security and justice systems through a gender-sensitive approach can make an important contribution to preventing VAWG, including sexual violence in conflict situations, by improving access to justice for survivors, tackling impunity, and preventing abuses by security and justice providers. As the UK's *Building Stability Overseas Strategy*⁸⁰ acknowledges, building capable, accountable and responsive security and justice systems also contributes to upstream conflict prevention.⁸¹ This may in turn reduce the incidence of VAWG.

14. DFID has already made a commitment, set out in the February 2012 revision of the NAP, to integrate women, peace and security considerations into all of its security and justice programming in conflict-affected and fragile states.⁸² It is too early to say what progress has been made against this objective, however Saferworld recommends that an assessment of whether this has been included in country operational plans and business cases should be included in the evaluation of the NAP due to be conducted in 2013.

15. This also reflects international commitments contained in UN Security Council resolutions 1820 and 1888, which emphasise the importance of addressing sexual violence through security and justice reform. However implementation internationally has been weak, and a commitment by G8 countries to review the gender-sensitivity of their security and justice programming could motivate much-needed progress. There is a significant body of evidence-based guidance on tackling sexual and gender-based violence through gender-sensitive security and justice sector reform, and it is to be welcomed that DFID is currently developing a theory of change for tackling violence against women and girls through security and justice programming.⁸³

16. The need to protect civilians in conflict situations is enshrined in international law, and therefore efforts to prevent sexual violence in conflict situations are welcome. While short-term measures are needed to protect civilians, prosecute perpetrators and provide services for survivors in conflict-affected areas, in the medium to long term it is necessary to look beyond a narrow focus on prosecutions of rape as a weapon of war as the most effective means of preventing it.

17. The incidence of VAWG increases in conflict situations, but VAWG occurs in all countries and has common causes, including discriminatory attitudes towards women and lack of access to justice. Therefore, in addition to shorter term efforts, in the long term, efforts must be focused on both adopting a holistic approach that addresses the causes of VAWG in all contexts and on preventing the outbreak of war. The UK has made commitments to prioritising upstream conflict prevention and to tackling the causes of VAWG in all its forms; too narrow focus on the use of rape as a weapon of war must not be allowed to take resources away from those broader aims.

⁷⁸ UK Government, *UK National Action Plan on 1325 Women, Peace and Security* (2012), p 15.

⁷⁹ Saferworld, *Taking international action to prevent sexual and gender-based violence*, (2012), <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Saferworld%20PSVI%20briefing.pdf>.

⁸⁰ UK Government, *Building Stability Overseas Strategy*, (2011).

⁸¹ Saferworld, *Upstream conflict prevention: Addressing the root causes of conflict*, (2012), <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/688>.

⁸² UK Government, *UK Government National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security* (2012), p 17.

⁸³ Saferworld is currently a member of a working group of experts assisting DFID in drafting this guidance.

VAWG and the post-2015 development framework

18. There is overwhelming evidence that violence against women undermines development, as well as being an abuse of human rights in itself.⁸⁴ Indeed, it has been described by UNIFEM as the “missing MDG target”.⁸⁵ Saferworld therefore supports the inclusion of a target on reducing violence against women under a standalone gender goal in the post-2015 development framework.⁸⁶ Targets which aim to address other root causes of gender inequality, for example on women’s economic empowerment and women’s political participation, would also contribute toward preventing VAWG as well as advancing women’s rights and gender equality more broadly.

19. Saferworld is advocating for the inclusion of commitments to address the causes of conflict in the post-2015 development framework.⁸⁷ As outlined above (paragraph 7–10), there is evidence to suggest that commitments to reducing violence against women may also contribute toward this aim. Similarly, commitments that help prevent conflict by putting in place the essential building blocks for peace, such as access to security and justice and inclusive participation in decision-making, may also help to prevent VAWG. The inclusion of commitments in the post-2015 framework on preventing VAWG and addressing the causes of conflict can therefore be seen as mutually supporting.

CONCLUSION

20. Tackling VAWG is a complex problem, which requires a holistic approach and strong international leadership. The UK Government’s commitment to pursuing diplomatic action on this agenda around key events in 2013 is welcome and UK leadership on women, peace, and security issues is strongly encouraged beyond the G8 and CSW. This must go hand in hand with action to ensure that UK initiatives take advantage of DFID’s existing expertise on tackling VAWG, and UK programming in conflict-affected and fragile states works to tackle VAWG through conflict prevention and action to address the causes of VAWG.

January 2013

Written evidence submitted by Save the Children UK

Save the Children is the world’s independent children’s rights organisation. Save the Children works in more than 120 countries. We save children’s lives. We fight for their rights. We help them fulfil their potential.

We have focused our submission to this timely inquiry on the following four issues:

- The extent to which DFID programmes on VAWG support the right policy instruments and reflect best practice, as outlined in DFID’s Theory of Change and related guidance.
- The extent to which DFID’s humanitarian responses address VAWG.
- Cross-governmental working within the UK, particularly co-operation between DFID, the FCO and the MoD on the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and the UK Government National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security.
- VAWG within the post-2015 development goals.

1. THE EXTENT TO WHICH DFID PROGRAMMES ON VAWG SUPPORT THE RIGHT POLICY INSTRUMENTS AND REFLECT BEST PRACTICE, AS OUTLINED IN DFID’S THEORY OF CHANGE AND RELATED GUIDANCE

- Between 500 million and 1.5 billion children experience violence annually.
- 150 million girls and 73 million boys worldwide are raped or subject to sexual violence each year.
- Three out of every four children experience violent discipline at home.
- 3 million girls and women are subjected to female genital mutilation every year.

1.1 We greatly welcome the UK government’s leadership on the issues of violence against women and girls, and sexual violence. We welcomed, in particular, Justine Greening’s November 2012 speech where she highlighted the particular gaps around protecting women and girls from violence in crisis situations, and the low proportion of humanitarian funding that goes towards protection from violence; and the January 21st release highlighting the importance of this year’s Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the links to the Girls’ Education Challenge fund. We have also strongly welcomed the FCO’s Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, and have worked closely to support and influence this over the past year. The more that the government can take a “whole-of-government” approach to violence against women and girls the better (including related initiatives such as the Building Stability Overseas Strategy, the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, etc.).

⁸⁴ See, for example, ActionAid, *Destined to fail? How violence against women is undoing development* (2010), http://www.actionaid.org.uk/doc_lib/destined_to_fail.pdf.

⁸⁵ UNIFEM, *The missing MDG target: violence against women video* (2010), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRb1PP1blfQ>.

⁸⁶ For more on this, see Gender and Development Network, *Achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment in the post-2015 framework* (2012), <http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk/gadn-post-2015-report/>.

⁸⁷ See Saferworld, *Addressing conflict and violence from 2015*, (2012), <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/post-20152015-issue-papers->

1.2 We are very supportive in general of DFID's Theory of Change and related guidance on VAWG and hope that this will be used to spread good practice and common understanding across other donors.

- However, we believe that the Theory of Change, guidance, and DFID's policies and practices on VAWG should be strengthened to incorporate a stronger awareness and focus on girls under the age of 18.
- We also want to ensure that attention to VAWG does not entirely obscure the violence perpetrated against a very significant number of boys. From Save the Children's experience, it is also vital to recognise the level of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation experienced by males, and particularly boys. Solely viewing men and boys as perpetrators and not survivors and/or witnesses, ignores the significant impact of sexual violence against males, from a physical, psychological, social and economic perspective. We do, however, agree that resources should be allocated in proportion to the scale of the problem, which in most if not all contexts will be heavily weighted towards women and girls.

1.3 We are concerned that the current Theory of Change lacks recognition of the age and developmental differences between girls and women. Having a uniform age range of 12–49 years—and thus programming approaches and interventions across such a wide age group—does not effectively respond to the specific needs of different age groups: the needs of a woman aged 40 differ greatly from the needs of a girl aged 16, and from a girl aged 6 even more. There is a need to break down the strategy and approaches to better define the different needs of women and girls less than 10 years old, 10–13, 14–17, 18–24, 25+.

1.4 The distinction between the different needs and special rights of children could be more strongly articulated in future iterations of the Theory of Change and related guidance. A satisfactory response to VAWG needs to include a continuum of prevention, protection and response that reflect the age-specific needs of girls and women, where adult services and children's services are complementary. This should be based on an integrated multi-sectoral response using the life cycle approach (covering health, protection, education, hunger and nutrition) which prevents (eg through advocacy, community mobilisation, awareness raising), protects (eg through a strengthened legislative and policy framework) and responds (eg through services such as health, legal, livelihoods education, the training of police and judiciary, etc).

1.5 Specific issues that could be addressed in revised guidance include, for example, the development of child protection systems that are connected and complementary with the actions to protect women from violence; ensuring services are age and developmental appropriate and tailored to the specific needs of adolescent girls and younger children; creating opportunities for child-led approaches to reducing VAWG; a greater focus on child protection within education that can help to reduce VAWG as well as student drop-out rates; and the incorporation of child protection in security and justice sector reform work (including training in child protection for civilian cadres, peacekeepers and police).

1.6 The situation of adolescent girls (for Save the Children this includes girls from between 12 years to 17 years) needs particular attention. Girls in this age group often lose a significant degree of protection when they reach puberty, have children or get married and specific services for adolescent girls are often missing.

1.7 We would be happy to share further details of the design of our programme on prevention, protection **and response** to sexual violence in DRC which incorporates a number of the elements outlined in DFID's Practical Guide on Community Programming on VAWG but also includes additional and adapted elements to better take into account the particular issues related to adolescent and younger girls.

1.8 There would be a stronger underpinning for this work if DFID also made clear what progress it has made towards the development and implementation of a child safeguarding policy and code of conduct, with specific commitments to ensure that children are safeguarded in the programmes and projects that DFID operates and funds.

2. THE EXTENT TO WHICH DFID'S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES ADDRESS VAWG

2.1 We welcome Justine Greening's speech of 28th November 2012, where she recognised that VAWG should be prioritised in humanitarian response and agree that there is certainly more that can be done to make this a reality.

2.1 We know that VAWG is a very important issue in humanitarian response: that women and children—often including significant numbers of survivors of violence—make up the majority of refugees and that these populations are at risk of becoming victims of violence during humanitarian crises. Yet, we still see huge gaps in ensuring that the security needs for women and girls are met in humanitarian response. Recently we were told by a girl in one refugee camp in Syria that she would rather go back to her conflict affected community than stay in the camp, because of the high level of gender-based violence that is prevalent and because of the absence of effective redress mechanisms. As a start VAWG needs to be integrated into, and funded as, part of first phase emergency response.

2.2 Save the Children's research on funding for protection in emergencies⁸⁸, and for protective sectors such as child protection and education especially, indicate that there is a crisis that needs to be addressed if we are serious about prioritising VAWG in humanitarian response.

⁸⁸ "Too Little Too Late" (2011), written by Save the Children on behalf of the Global Child Protection Working Group

2.3 The three worst funded sectors in humanitarian funding in 2009 were Protection (including gender-based violence), Child Protection, and Education, all of which can play important roles in preventing women and girls from experiencing violence and abuse in crisis situations.

2.4 Our research on the Financial Tracking Service (FTS) for OCHA (the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), indicates that the UK government, which is a major humanitarian donor, is not reported as directly funding any child protection projects at all in any appeals in 2008 and only funds such projects at a low level in 2009. Given the close connection with VAWG work, we would suggest that—if this information is correct—the UK government needs to seriously consider how it can build such preventative action into its humanitarian funding, over and above any financial commitment to UNICEF.

2.5 We welcome Justine Greening's announcement on 26th January of £21m in new humanitarian aid for people caught up in the crisis in Syria, to "help deliver life-saving winter clothing, food and medicine". However as we understand it none of this investment has been earmarked for child protection, which is an area of great and increasing need in the region.

3. CROSS-GOVERNMENTAL WORKING WITHIN THE UK, PARTICULARLY CO-OPERATION BETWEEN DFID, THE FCO AND THE MOD ON THE PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE INITIATIVE AND THE UK GOVERNMENT NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON UNSCR 1325 WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

3.1 We are glad to see that VAWG is currently at the centre of the efforts of a number of different government departments. Our experience with the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) indicates that welcome efforts are being made to encourage cross-government working on this issue. We know that a number of members of the PSVI team have been drawn from DFID for example.

3.2 We do think, however, that more can be done to ensure that this collaboration filters through to the day-to-day work of the different government departments. We were disappointed, for example, that only one representative from DFID was able to attend the cross-government Roundtable on Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict (with a focus on children and youth) at the beginning of January 2013. We hope that there will be greater signs of cross-governmental working on VAWG in the coming months—for example, it would be helpful if DFID could take the lead on convening a donor meeting related to the prevention of, and response to, sexual violence as a follow up to the G8 Foreign Ministers meeting in April, as it has a great deal of expertise to offer on VAWG and can address a wider set of issues than will be addressed by the G8 Foreign Ministers.

3.3 We would also like to see the links reinforced between VAWG work and the Children and Armed Conflict agenda (and related Security Council Resolutions). We would like to see, for example, the UK government augmenting and linking their work on UNSCR 1325 to include the relevant resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict. The "Comprehensive Strategy On Combating Sexual Violence In The Democratic Republic Of The Congo" could serve as a model as it addresses relevant issues and objectives contained in Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) on Women and Peace and Security, 1612 (2005) on Children and Armed Conflict, 1674 (2006) on Protection of Civilians, and 1756 (2007) and 1856 (2008) on the situation concerning the DRC

4. VAWG WITHIN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT GOALS

4.1 As laid out clearly in DFID's Theory of Change, the root cause of VAWG is gender inequality and this must be central to discussions about the post-2015 development framework. As our recent reports "Ending Poverty in Our Generation"⁸⁹ and "Born Equal"⁹⁰ show, inequality, including gender inequality, was a major blind spot in the MDG framework and yet is a major determinant of children's well-being.

4.2 Therefore, progress on gender equality and women's rights should be reflected throughout the post-2015 development framework as an important contribution to the reduction of VAWG in the future. As well as considering how this can be reflected in the composition of the goals themselves, we would also like the UK government to use the opportunity of the post-2015 discussions to confront the increasing resistance to the realisation of women's rights in certain regions by focusing on global advocacy on holding governments accountable for the protection of women's rights.

4.3 We would like to focus the bulk of our response to the question about VAWG within the post-2015 development framework on an issue that has been under-represented in the post-2015 debates to date: the *importance of protecting children—and the girl child in particular—from violence and abuse*. As noted above, there is an urgent need to develop more appropriate child-sensitive approaches to tackling VAWG which offer much greater protection to girls. These should be incorporated into the post-2015 settlement as part of a general commitment to preventing and responding to all violence and the improvement of human security.

⁸⁹ Save the Children, *Ending Poverty in Our Generation: Save the Children's vision for a post 2015 framework*, Jan 2013, <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/ending-poverty-our-generation>

⁹⁰ Save the Children, *Born Equal: How Reducing Inequality Could Give Our Children a Better Future*, Nov 2012

*VAWG in the post-2015 development framework*⁹¹: *Reflecting the particular needs and rights of girls and boys*

4.4 Protecting girls and boys from violence:

- The post-2015 framework must address the elements of the Millennium Declaration that are missing in the current MDGs, in particular that which states that: “The prevention and reduction of all forms of violence and abuse—and protection against their specific manifestations (...) should be at the heart of any agenda which fully recognizes the centrality of human security, both as a human rights imperative and as integral to development.”
- Without freedom from violence all other development gains are rendered worthless—a life saved, an education attained or an individual lifted out of absolute poverty mean little when a person is subject to the horrors of violence, repeated abuse or criminal exploitation. Human security—particularly the safety and security of every girl and boy—cannot be ignored any longer.
- The proposal for an explicit child protection goal is part of Save the Children’s vision for the post-2015 framework as laid out in our recent report, “Ending poverty in our generation.”

4.5 The scale of the problem:

- For millions of girls and boys, violence takes place on a daily basis—at home, at school, in institutions, at work and in the community. The social acceptance of some forms of violence (such as Female Genital Mutilation and corporal punishment), discrimination (based on gender, disability, sexual diversity, ethnicity, religion, etc.) and economic factors such as poverty (which is a key factor driving child marriage), also place girls and boys at additional risk. Girls and boys are particularly vulnerable during armed conflict and in the aftermath of disasters.
- While we have made progress in understanding the violence against girls and boys, including through the UN Study on Violence Against Children, the full scale of violence is unknown as so much of it goes unreported. But the figures above give an indication of the enormous magnitude of the situation—a crisis of child protection that is different in nature but not in fundamentals between the developed and developing world. Furthermore, with greater globalization, urbanization and climate change, violence against girls and boys has become increasingly connected across countries and regions, through child trafficking, child abusive images, child migration, and the rising number of climate-related disasters.

4.6 The protection of girls and boys in the current MDG framework:

- The lack of a focus on child protection in the current MDGs has resulted in insufficient attention from donors and governments and has sent an unfortunate signal that child protection is not a priority of the international community. This has not only been damaging to the safety and security of girls and boys across the world but has played an important part in hindering progress towards the achievement of the current MDGs—including poverty reduction, getting children into schools, eliminating gender inequality or reducing child mortality.
- Protecting girls and boys from violence, abuse and exploitation is not only necessary to achieve each of the current goals, but is also essential to achieving them with equity. Where they exist, child protection programmes and interventions by governments or NGOs, address the concerns of some of the most marginalized children in every society—especially those who are hardest to reach. This includes those most directly affected by poverty and destitution that are at heightened risk of abandonment, being sold into bonded labour or trafficked into sexual exploitation. Children living in fragile or failed states, in situations of conflict, protracted crises and natural disasters are even further exposed to the risk of being abused, exploited and neglected.
- Of course, the protection of girls and boys costs money and the absence of child protection from the current MDG framework has diverted donors attention from a sector that has constantly been amongst the most poorly funded as a result. The persistent scarcity of sustained funding for child protection has put girls and boys at further risk of being abused, exploited and neglected, with a direct impact on their lives and development, and with an invisible but high cost on society as a whole.
- Studies in the USA, Australia and New Zealand, using similar methodologies, have calculated the direct and indirect financial costs of child abuse and neglect for these societies. In the USA, child abuse and neglect affects over 1 million children every year, and is estimated to cost the country \$220 million every day. The total lifetime estimated financial costs associated with the current annual rate of confirmed cases of child maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and neglect) is approximately \$124 billion.

4.7 The need for a stand-alone child protection goal:

⁹¹ Drawn from Save the Children, Child Protection in the post-2015 development agenda: Thematic think piece by Save the Children (forthcoming)

- The protection of girls and boys and the promotion of their well-being is closely linked to the development and well-being of their society. On the basis of the vital importance of human rights, equitable development and the centrality of human security, the post-2015 framework must include their protection. For the sake of the world's girls and boys it is imperative to avoid any further neglect of this issue. The post-2015 agenda must include a stand-alone child protection goal which should read as follows:
 - By 2030 we will ensure all children live a life free from all forms of violence, are protected in conflict and thrive in a safe family environment.
- Save the Children believes that such a goal is in reach and should be part of the post-2015 framework. A child protection goal should apply to all countries, irrespective of their level of development. The following targets and indicators could underpin the goal:

| <i>Proposed targets</i> | <i>Indicators</i> |
|--|---|
| 1. End the child deaths from armed conflict; halve the number of non-conflict violent deaths of children (eg intentional homicide) | 1a Number of direct child deaths from armed conflict per year per child population (disaggregated per age and sex) 1b Number of intentional homicides of children per year per child population |
| 2. Halve the number of children who are subject to sexual violence and abuse of any form | 2a Rate of girls and women, boys and men subject to physical/sexual violence in the last 12 months 2b Number of adults and children per 100,000 who report experiencing sexual violence and abuse in conflict in the last 12 months (disaggregated per age and sex) (national surveys) |
| 3. Halve the number of children subjected to violent discipline at home | 3a Prevalence of violent discipline: percentage of children who experienced any violent discipline in the home in the last month (disaggregated per sex and age) (Unicef's MICS surveys) |
| 4. Halve the number of children unnecessarily living outside family care (including children affected by emergencies) | 4a Number and percentage of girls and boys living outside family care (disaggregated by type of living arrangement) (data from national governments) 4b Percentage of separated children being reunited with their family or placed in family-based care (disaggregated per age and sex) |

4.8 Summary of conclusions and recommendations to reflect child protection in the post-2015 development framework:

- The post-2015 framework must include a child protection goal with specific targets and indicators that will address the protection needs of all girls and boys. The child protection goal should be relevant for all the countries in the world, independent of their level of development or income. This would ensure focus, investment, commitment and results.
- Comprehensive child protection systems should be promoted, providing a sustainable and coordinated solution to protect all children, without any discrimination, especially those at risk of being, or who have been, exposed to violence in any form.
- The post-2015 agenda should be the trigger for countries and donors to invest substantive resources in developing and agreeing comprehensive sets of child protection indicators, including data on children who do not live in families.
- The post-2015 framework should ensure commitments to child protection funding and resource allocations by national governments, bilateral and multilateral donors. This funding should encompass emergency preparedness, response and recovery as well as longer term development, be sustainable, predictable and tracked through specific child protection markers.
- The post-2015 development agenda should address inequalities that heighten the risks for girls and boys of experiencing violence, addressing the root causes of violence and not just its effects and manifestations.
- The post-2015 agenda should ensure that any call for stronger investment in social protection programmes is inclusive of the basic services that support families to care for and protect their children, prevent violence, and support children in need of assistance and alternative care.
- The involvement of boys and girls in their protection alongside responsible adults can create a virtuous circle—re-engaging vulnerable and marginalized children in their communities rather than pushing them to the margins.

Written evidence submitted by Stonewall

SUMMARY

1. This paper contains Stonewall's response to the International Development Select Committee's call for written evidence on Violence Against Women. Stonewall is the leading lesbian, gay and bisexual equality organisation in Europe and campaigns and lobbies to advance the human rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people both in Britain and worldwide.

2. Stonewall's response to a number of key issues included in the inquiry's terms of reference is below. For more information on this submission please contact Jasmine O'Connor, International Officer on jasmine.oconnor@stonewall.org.uk or 020 7593 3464. All Stonewall research referenced in this submission is available from www.stonewall.org.uk/publications.

3. Violence against women globally is widely reported and recorded. There is also a developing body of evidence on the specific experiences of lesbians and bisexual women. It is known that additional barriers exist in tackling violence against lesbians and bisexual women, which must be addressed alongside the barriers to addressing violence against women generally.

4. As a particularly vulnerable group in many societies, lesbians and bisexual women must be consulted on their specific needs. It cannot be assumed that these needs will be effectively addressed in wider work on violence against women. More research is needed to better understand the problem and develop potential solutions.

DETAIL

5. The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women states that violence against women is 'Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.' In 2011 the first ever United Nations report on the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people detailed how women globally are killed or endure hate-motivated violence, torture, detention and criminalisation and experience discrimination in jobs, health care and education because of their real or perceived sexual orientation.

6. Lesbians and bisexual women break social norms just by being themselves. This makes them particularly vulnerable to violence predicated on the basis of both their gender and sexual orientation. The Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women noted that 'lesbian women face an increased risk of becoming victims of violence, especially rape, because of widely held prejudices and myths', including 'for instance, that lesbian women would change their sexual orientation if they are raped by a man'. Lesbians are also particularly vulnerable to forced marriage, forced impregnation, honour killings and other violent attempts to either change their sexual orientation or punish them for it. The Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women has reported alleged incidents of gang rapes, family violence and murder experienced by lesbians and bisexual and transgender women in El Salvador, Kyrgyzstan and South Africa. Stonewall's own research 'No Going Back' (2010) also reported cases of rape against lesbians and bisexual women from Africa and the Caribbean.

7. Generally violence against women remains under-reported due to shame, fear of reprisal or lack of access to police and judicial remedy. This is particularly the case for lesbians and bisexual women who may be afraid to report and disclose their sexual orientation, especially in countries where same-sex sexual activity is criminal or police are homophobic. The Special Rapporteur on Torture and the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women have both recorded cases where lesbians and bisexual and transgender women have been allegedly sexually assaulted by police.

8. Stonewall welcomes the Department for International Development's 'New Strategic Vision for Girls and Women: stopping poverty before it starts' and broadly agrees with its analysis and proposed plan of change. Of particular importance is the need to ensure responses are context specific and tailored to the affected population. Stonewall also welcomes the 'How to Note' which reinforces this need and calls for data to be disaggregated by sexual orientation.

9. Pillar 4 'Preventing Violence' in the 'New Strategic Vision for Girls and Women' fails however to address the additional barriers which must be tackled to prevent violence against lesbians and bisexual women. Laws which criminalise same-sex relationships serve to perpetuate homophobia at all levels of society and can create a culture of impunity for those who commit violence against gay women. Laws which limit the right to freedom of expression or the right to assembly of LGBT populations limit the ability of bisexual women and lesbians from speaking out against violence based both on their sexual orientation and gender. Media outlets which may condemn VAW might at the same time be complicit in perpetuating harmful myths about lesbians and bisexual women. While there may be some political will to address violence against women generally, politicians in parts of Africa, the Arab World and Asia may at the same time promote hatred against lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Strategies to eliminate violence against women must address these specific issues.

10. Research published by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Poverty and Sexuality 2010) shows that, in the absence of these enabling rights, lesbian, gay and bisexual people experience significant discrimination in development initiatives. Lesbians and bisexual women risk being excluded from

community led development initiatives, as well as public and private services. In some countries lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils can legally be expelled from school due to their sexual orientation. Sometimes they will drop out of education due to homophobia. This exclusion serves to disempower lesbians and bisexual women. Pillar 3 'Getting Girls through Secondary School' must take into account the additional barriers which can prevent lesbians and bisexual women accessing education.

11. Pillar 3 which focuses on delaying first pregnancy and supporting safe childbirth may be of limited benefit to lesbians. Instead strategies should be adopted which enable women to also choose not to marry men and have children with them. Ultimately lesbians and bisexual women need to be empowered to exercise their right to form relationships and have families of their own choosing, regardless of the gender of their partner.

12. Under Pillar 1 'Economic Assets Direct to Girls and Women' the specific circumstances of lesbians and bisexual women need to be recognised. Lesbians and bisexual women face barriers to economic assets along with women generally. However lesbians and bisexual women may experience additional discrimination due to their sexual orientation. In many countries people can be sacked or simply not hired if they are known to be gay. If unemployed, lesbians and bisexual women often find they cannot fall back on family or community support and have no access to land. As a result gay women in developing countries which criminalise same-sex sexual activity are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and economic hardship, sometimes resorting to high risk professions such as sex work. Initiatives involving the private sector must address discrimination against lesbians and bisexual women if they are to succeed. Solutions such as cash transfer programmes must be designed so as to ensure they reach lesbians and bisexual women.

13. DFID rightly recognises that attempts to address the barriers to eliminating violence against women can cause a backlash. It is clear that any intervention must be based on a full risk assessment and put in place a comprehensive mitigation strategy. Lesbians, bisexual women and their allies can experience a backlash for challenging traditional norms of both gender and sexual orientation. The Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders has expressed deep concern regarding 'denigration campaigns and violent threats against defenders of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights.' The Rapporteur noted that in 2007 those 'defending the rights of LGBT and intersex persons had had their houses and offices raided, and been attacked, tortured, sexually abused, threatened and killed.'

14. In many countries these kinds of reprisals mean that lesbians and bisexual women lack allies in the broader human rights and women's sector. Groups supporting the rights of lesbians and bisexual women often exist only as part of the broader gay equality movement. In many countries this group is severely marginalised and often has even less access to decision makers than women in the general population. Initiatives need to be developed to address this lack of agency. DFID needs to ensure that lesbians and bisexual women are fully consulted. Initiatives should be developed to enable their voices to be heard before key national policy makers. Similarly initiatives should be explored which help build understanding between general women's groups and gay women.

15. The Government should ensure that the Ministerial Champion on Violence Against Women and Girls Overseas has a focus on lesbians and bisexual women as an under-addressed minority. The Ministerial Champion must have the access, authority and resources to drive this strategy forward across Government, especially across the FCO, DFID and MoD, and report annually to parliament on progress.

16. DFID's work to eliminate violence against bisexual women and lesbians should also work in tandem with the FCO's strategy to address issues of lesbian, gay and bisexual equality through diplomatic means. Opportunities exist for carefully constructed strategies to bring about change. This is particularly the case in countries where there is political will to support the fundamental human rights of all people and anti-gay sex laws are not being actively evoked. The Government's strategy for trade also has a role to play. Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme includes over 100 international firms who all recognise the importance of gay equality. There are opportunities for the UK Government to partner with these UK head quartered international firms to help advance the arguments for gay equality.

17. Stonewall notes that the Gender and Development Network is pressing for the post-2015 MDG framework to include a specific target on ending violence against women and girls within a dedicated standalone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment. Stonewall would like to see any such target contain a specific indicator dealing with the unique barriers to eliminating violence against lesbians and bisexual women as outlined in this document. In addition indicators under all the goals should, where possible, be disaggregated by sexuality. For example statistics on rapists brought to justice should show how many of the rapes were against lesbians and bisexual women and how many were against heterosexual women. Finally, DFID should remain alive to opportunities under other goals to include specific targets and indicators which will empower lesbians and bisexual women. For example any goal relating to secondary education should include a target to make schools safe for all with specific indicators on tackling homophobic bullying.

CONCLUSIONS

Stonewall believes that DFID's strategy to eliminate violence against women must take into account the particular needs of lesbians and bisexual women. In particular Stonewall recommends that:

- Efforts should be made to address the specific barriers to eliminating violence against lesbians and bisexual women.
- Work under all four pillars of DFID's 'Strategic Vision for Girls and Women: stopping poverty before it starts' must take into account the specific needs of lesbians and bisexual women.
- Serious attention should be given to risk analysis and mitigation.
- DFID should support research and pilot projects which can address the specific needs of lesbians and bisexual women across all pillars.
- The UK Government should ensure its strategy is joined up across Whitehall, in particular with the FCO's strategy for gay equality.
- The UK Government should press for the inclusion of targets and indicators in the post 2015 framework related to preventing violence against lesbians and bisexual women and empowering them.

January 2013

Written evidence submitted by Tearfund

SUMMARY

- Her Majesty's Government is supporting a strong response to VAWG when it occurs, but could do more to reduce the vulnerability of women, and the threat of violence.
- Vulnerability is addressed by building in a strong VAWG angle to DFID's humanitarian and development programmes. This should go beyond measuring organisational safeguarding policies to looking at outputs, such as sustained cultural change in a community.
- The threat is reduced by changing the culture, which involves empowering women in all spheres of life. Local churches have a particular role to play. Historically many have deepened the impact of the sexual violence crisis through silence and by reinforcing stigma and discrimination. This needs to be reversed, but in doing so, churches worldwide, and especially in Africa, have huge untapped potential to respond to the crisis.
- Her Majesty's Government should continue to develop strong, cross-governmental work on this, and pursue the buy-in of bi- and multi-lateral partners.

RESPONSE

1. Any strategy for tackling any issue must deal with both prevention of the issue and response to it. Prevention can be couched in terms of reducing risk: with a standard method of calculating risk as threat multiplied by vulnerability.

2. It is Tearfund's contention that whilst the British Government should be commended for taking enormous strides forward in their response to sexual violence, particularly against women and girls, it has more to do to prevent the incidence of sexual violence. VAWG is being dealt with as a criminal matter (as it should be) with the emphasis on prosecution and punishment so that conviction rates increase and impunity is reduced.

3. This judicial response will act as some deterrent. However, for sustained reduction of VAWG, the issues of women' and girls' empowerment in health, education, economic growth and good governance are all equally important.

4. For example, Water and Sanitation programmes are the most celebrated (but not the only) example of programmes which have huge impacts on the vulnerability of women and girls to sexual violence. They can reduce or remove the vulnerability implicit in risky 'commutes' for water and poorly designed sanitation facilities. Through our water and sanitation projects Tearfund has seen countless examples of reduced vulnerability.

5. For example, our partner in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Programme de Promotion de Soins Santé Primaires (PPSSP) has seen significant successes in combating HIV/AIDS, Sexual Violence and WASH through an integrated programme. The links between sanitation and sexual violence become apparent when, due to lack of access to private latrines, women faced no choice but to find private places to defecate, often at night and considerable distance away from their homes further increasing their risk of sexual violence. Prior to this project, in 2009 only 20% of the local population had access to latrines, 60% had access to clean water, there was no system for waste management. Victims of rape did not have access to medical and psychological support and marriage of underage girls was acceptable by all. By April 2011, 14 villages were certified by local authorities recently as 'open defecation free' and 85% of households were using latrines. 12 mother-girls were attending school, which was unheard in that community in the past and school registration had increased from 40% to 60%. People are aware of how HIV is spread and the means of prevention, and religious leaders have accepted to speak openly about HIV/AIDS and the use of condoms as a preventive mode. On Sexual Violence/Trauma:

- Survivors of sexual violence have decided to break the silence and speak out

- Community mechanisms have been put in place to discourage early marriage, with an 80% reduction of marriage of children under 18 years old.
- 80% of cases of child-rape are reported compared with none before the project
- 100% of reported cases of rape receive medical and psychological support within 72 hours.
- Reported cases of women who are beaten by their spouses have decreased by 60%
- 70% of women say they can express their views and actively participate in decision making in community meetings.

6. However, where DFID is funding programmes which do not have VAWG as the primary focus, VAWG can feel something of an afterthought. The same can apply for humanitarian responses. Even if there is funding for capacity-building in VAWG there is often little scheduled for sustaining such efforts or following-up. It is true that DFID will request details of the VAWG programme. But the emphasis tends to be on the development of organisational safeguarding policies rather than on sustained cultural change in the community, which ultimately will reduce VAWG. Preventing VAWG during humanitarian responses, particularly in food distribution, has not been emphasised by DFID. There is a requirement for INGOs to sign-up to the UN Secretary General's Bulletin on Sexual Violence (2003) however there is no mechanism for pursuing breaches of its Code of Conduct. It is unclear that DFID has the expertise within the department to advise on either the structure, or the monitoring of interventions to combat VAWG.

7. DFID should not shy away from investing in changing culture to reduce the threat of sexual violence. Whilst this is the more difficult part of the risk equation (addressing the threat rather than the vulnerability), it is addressable through the work of local civil society. Tearfund's particular expertise and experience is in the work local churches must and can do to change culture and attitudes to sexual violence, explored in our report *Silent No More*. This found that whilst many churches deepen the impact of the sexual violence crisis through silence and by reinforcing stigma and discrimination, churches worldwide, and especially in Africa, have huge untapped potential to respond to the crisis, as they are a key part of community life. On the back of this report, Tearfund has helped to co-ordinate the new faith-based *We Will Speak Out* coalition.

8. Part of DFID's neglect of culture-change is because DFID is only just beginning to become comfortable working with NGOs whose partners are faith-based organisations and churches, partners who are well placed to amend their own behaviour and deliver significant social change. DFID is seeking to make progress on this through, for example, its 'Faith Partnership Principles.' Progress is slow, because it depends on a deepening of trust, understanding and respect. It is worth noting that the PSVI experts who were recently deployed to the borders of Syria include amongst their four recommendations the importance of involving and training of faith-based leaders to ensure support to victims and challenging deeply-held values and beliefs.

9. The work on VAWG must not neglect sexual violence against men and boys, who form a significant minority of those who experience sexual violence. In fact, research indicates that boys and men are increasingly susceptible in Afghanistan and the growing conflict of Syria.

10. It is encouraging that combating VAWG has become a key concern of many senior government figures, and features amongst the ministerial priorities of four ministers in four departments as well as being a core focus for the current Secretaries of State for International Development and Foreign and Commonwealth affairs (the latter a fifth department). The desire of so many members of government to make progress on this issue is to be applauded. On the role of the International Violence Against Women Champion, specifically, there is an opportunity to engage across Whitehall and with civil society to shape the strategy for that role to deliver most effectively.

11. Because of this range of ministerial interest, cross-government working is crucial. A particular current issue is that the Stabilisation Unit, through the PSVI, has as identified, interviewed and recruited 73 multi-disciplinary experts from across the UK. However their deployment is contingent upon funding from DFID. Possible immediate deployments include Syria, DRC, S.Sudan and Mali, but there is no current schedule of when these will happen and for what purpose.

12. As regards multilateral partners, in any future multilateral aid review DFID should consider assessing the amount and effectiveness of agencies implicit or explicit work on VAWG. The UK should be lobbying at the UN and bi-laterally for peace-keepers to be properly trained in preventing and responding to sexual violence. At the same time, the MoD should strengthen the training provided to British personnel. It is disappointing that international governments (such as Canada, Germany, and the USA) and institutional funders are adopting a wait-and-see approach on the outcomes of PSVI rather than coming alongside the UK from the outset. Aside from limiting funding and expertise, this is particularly problematic for interventions in countries which have few historic links with the UK. A useful metric for assessing the UK's success with multilateral partners is the number of jointly promulgated and funded VAWG initiatives.

13. As regards the post-2015 development goals, the UN High Level Panel for post 2015 should consider recommending a separate and specific global goal on gender equality for which eradicating VAWG could be a target. Because of the need to change culture, not just practice, it is essential that goals and targets related to gender equality go beyond access to services and tackles equal rights from issues such as employment to political participation. In assessing progress made towards the goals and targets we agree with the Committee's

position set out in your report on post-2015 that data should be broken down ('disaggregated') by gender, ethnicity, region, and by other variables as appropriate to ensure that disparities are not overlooked.

February 2013

Written evidence submitted by UN Women

INTRODUCTION TO UN WOMEN

1. In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The creation of UN Women came about as part of the UN reform agenda. It merged and built on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, namely: the Division for the Advancement of Women; the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women; the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women; and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM.

2. The main roles and responsibilities of UN Women are: i) to support inter-governmental bodies in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms; ii) to help Member States to implement these standards; and iii) to hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality.

3. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most widespread violations of human rights. It can include physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse and it cuts across boundaries of age, race, culture, wealth and geography. It takes place in the home, on the streets, in schools, the workplace, refugee camps, during conflicts and crises. It has many manifestations, from the most universally prevalent forms of domestic and sexual violence, to harmful practices, so-called honour killings and other types of violence. Globally, up to seven out of every ten women experience intimate partner violence (physical and/or sexual violence) in their lifetime as is shown by the various national studies completed.

4. VAWG has far-reaching multiple consequences, harming families, communities and countries. For women and girls 16–44 years old, violence is a major cause of death and disability. A World Bank study⁹² (1994) on ten selected risk factors facing girls and women in this age group, found rape and domestic violence more dangerous than cancer, motor vehicle accidents, war and malaria. VAWG not only violates human rights, but also hampers productivity, reduces human capital and undermines economic growth. Annual costs of intimate partner violence have been calculated at USD 5.8 billion in the United States⁹³ (2003) and GBP 22.9 billion in England and Wales⁹⁴ and AUD 13.6 billion in Australia (2009).⁹⁵

5. UN Women works on several fronts towards ending VAWG. This includes tackling its main root: gender inequality. Efforts are multiplied through advocacy campaigns and partnerships with governments, civil society and the UN system. Initiatives range from working to establish legal frameworks and specific national actions, to supporting prevention at the grassroots level, including in conflict and post-conflict situations. UN Women has also supported data collection on VAWG, facilitating new learning on the issue.

COLLABORATION UN WOMEN AND DFID

6. The United Kingdom was among the Member States who actively contributed to the establishment of UN Women and continues to be a strong supporter. UN Women's collaboration with DFID has greatly benefited from the longstanding partnerships that its predecessor entities, in particular UNIFEM, had with DFID. Some of the programmes supported under UNIFEM continued after the establishment of UN Women and are presented in more detail in the sections below.

7. The United Kingdom has translated its political commitment to UN Women's establishment into its financial contribution to support the implementation of UN Women's Strategic Plan (2011–2013) priorities, which includes EVAW. In 2012, the United Kingdom was the top contributor to UN Women's regular (core) resources and the second largest contributor to core in 2011. In addition, non-core support has been provided to various UN Women programmes and projects, particularly in relation to VAWG and peace and security work.

8. The total amount of DFID financial support to various VAWG projects (at HQ and the field) during 2011–2012 is approximately US \$3 million. Other support provided by DFID to UN Women's work was directed at support to research, the economic empowerment of women and women's political participation.

9. DFID has supported over the years, in various amounts, the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund). This is a leading multilateral pooled grant-making mechanism exclusively devoted to supporting country and local-level action to address violence against women and girls. Established in 1996, the UN Trust Fund is administered by UN Women, on behalf of the United Nations System. As a grant-making fund, contributions received from donors are channeled each year

⁹² Heise, L et al. 1994. "Violence against Women: The Hidden Health Burden." World Bank Discussion Paper #255. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

⁹³ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. 2003. Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta

⁹⁴ Walby, S 2004. The Costs of Domestic Violence, Women and Equality Unit: University of Leeds, Leeds

⁹⁵ UN-Women, Fact sheet: Violence against Women and the Millennium Development Goals (2010).

to programmes at country level. In 1998, the United Kingdom became the eighth member state to contribute to the UN Trust Fund. That year, the UK supported 29 projects across the globe for a two-year duration. In 2001, DFID also contributed US\$ 28,169 towards the US\$ 1 million total grants awarded to 18 projects. By 2012, with the support of over 53 United Nations Member States, partners in the private sector and civil society, the UN Trust Fund had supported 351 programmes in 128 countries and territories with over US\$ 86 million.

10. In addition to direct funding support, DFID has played a key, strategic role in a variety of high level global VAWG meetings and events, as well in the development of substantive theoretical VAWG guidance and forward-looking strategies which shows DFID's clear leadership in this area. DFID is also one of the first donors shifting towards a major focus on *prevention* of violence as a complementary, essential approach to VAWG, rather than limiting its support to responding to VAWG.

The extent to which DFID programmes on VAWG support the right policy instruments and reflect best practice, as outlined in DFID's Theory of Change and related guidance.

11. Below follows a brief overview of the different forms of collaboration between UN Women and DFID in the area of VAWG and peace and security, and to what extent its programmes support relevant policy and best practices related to VAWG.

12. DFID played the key role in supporting UN Women (and formerly UNIFEM) to build and evolve the field of women, peace and security after the passage of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). After the passage of the resolution, DFID supported UNIFEM for the "Women, Peace and Security Global Programme" from 2002 to 2006. At the time, global knowledge and practice on women, peace and security was disparate and marginal. The global programme enabled UNIFEM to develop policy in key areas, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, early warning, access to justice, and support country offices to develop innovative approaches and build the portfolio of best practice. Protection and VAWG were key components of this programme, along with participation, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, recovery, etc. After the UN system was given the ambitious mandate of 1325, DFID funding allowed UNIFEM to develop policy frameworks and tools to catalyze implementation.

13. The UK Permanent Mission to the UN in New York also showed significant leadership in pushing forward the passage of the subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (SCR 1820, 1889, 1960), as well as consistently insisting on the integration of gender into other areas of the Security Council's programme of work.

14. Among the (non-financial) technical collaboration between DFID and UN Women can be mentioned the extensive consultation between staff of both entities during the formulation of various DFID "How To Notes" which provide evidence-based guidance on VAWG, including the "Theory of Change" grounded in the latest research and understanding on how to effectively and strategically address the issue. DFID's research and innovation agenda on VAWG launched in November 2012 demonstrates the Department's intricate knowledge of the field and dedication to improving understanding of key gap areas necessary to advance effective implementation.

15. A UN Women staff participated in the Expert Meeting organized in 2012 by DFID in collaboration with GirlHub to foster research on adolescents and girls. This meeting drew together experts in the field of adolescent girls to discuss priority research areas, evidence gaps and methodological issues, with the main purpose to inform DFID's future research on adolescent girls. A result of the meeting was the establishment of a Donor Network on Adolescent Girls in which UN Women has been invited to participate.

The effectiveness of DFID funding mechanisms for VAWG and the systems in place to measure their impact

16. The three year-programme *Enhancing Delivery of Security and Justice Services for Women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, was launched in March 2011 and is fully funded by DFID (US \$3.4 million). It is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the High Judiciary Council, the Palestinian Bar Association and the Attorney General Office. Through this programme, UN Women is also closely partnering with the EU Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support.

17. The Security and Justice for Women programme addresses the need to improve Palestinian women victims of violence's access to justice by setting up a system of specialized professionals, including from the judicial and security sectors, capable of dealing with VAW from a gender perspective and in accordance with rule of law principles. The programme also supports the creation and institutionalization of systems, policies, procedures and mechanisms related to access to equitable justice for women victims of violence.

18. VAW in the State of Palestine is considered among the most widespread threats to women's lives, undermining their ability to enjoy and exercise fundamental human rights. VAW remains a challenge of major concern for Palestinian institutions and civil society organizations and other partners. This requires concerted efforts at the institutional level and innovative approaches across sectors to ensure women are protected and access services throughout their experience of violence.

19. In late 2012, DFID fielded a mission to review the Access to Justice programme, looking in particular at aspects such as the results framework and theory of change and value for money. The mission identified the programme as an *example of good practice* to be highlighted in DFID's guidance to country offices. DFID has indicated an interest in up-scaling and extending the support to and partnership with UN Women under the Security and Justice for Women flagship initiative.

20. DFID supported two more phases of the Women, Peace and Security global programme: "Supporting Women's Engagement in Peace-building and Preventing Sexual Violence in Community-led Approaches" (2006 to 2009) and "From Communities to Global Security Institutions (2010 to 2013). These programmes focused on improving women's security through enabling their participation in security decision-making and supporting grassroots efforts on peace-building and violence prevention. The programme creates space for women to develop and implement innovative and locally-relevant solutions to problems women face and links these solutions to the strategic level both nationally and internationally.

21. The first phase was evaluated by Social Development Direct for DFID. UNIFEM was deemed to have contributed to many important achievements at the national and international levels, including supporting Ugandan women to gain access to the Juba talks, supporting women to achieve seven% representation in the Afghanistan—Pakistan Peace Jirga and spearheading the efforts to pass resolution 1820 (2008), a landmark shift in how the international community defined sexual violence in conflict.

22. In the second phase, results achieved have been consolidated and deepened in select countries, with a specific focus on promoting a more holistic approach to addressing women's security. For example, economic insecurity was identified to be a major obstacle to women's security as survivors and their children were not able to leave abusive partners. UN Women engaged partners in all of the countries to add an economic empowerment component to the peacebuilding and violence prevention activities. Anecdotal feedback from the communities is showing that the initiatives are making women feel safer and reducing incidence of violence. However, an approximately one-year break in between the phases caused many of the capacities that had been built at the local level to be eroded. UN Women's partners had to spend much of 2011 re-establishing themselves after the break in funding. A full evaluation will be carried out at the programme's completion at the end of 2013.

23. The last two phases of the programme were monitored using DFID's logframe and annual review mechanisms. Reflecting on the past experience, baselines and indicators developed at global level proved to be difficult to measure or collect data on at the national level. It is far beyond the scope of this programme's small interventions at country-level to build the kind of information collection that would be required to establish that kind of data. The programme also relied on perception surveys to establish baselines, which are a more effective measure of how people feel about their security.

KEY EVENTS IN 2013: THE CSW 57 AND THE G8 SUMMIT

24. Every year, representatives of United Nations' Member States, UN entities, NGOs and other stakeholders gather for the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. The annual session provides an opportunity to review progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment, identify challenges, set global standards and norms and formulate policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide. The 57th CSW will take place in March 2013 and its priority theme this year is the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. UN Women provides substantive support to the Commission in all its aspects of its work, including to its Bureau.

25. In preparation for the CSW 57, an Expert Group Meeting on Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls was held in Bangkok (September 2012). Experts participating in the meeting ranged from researchers, representatives of civil society and academia, as well as observers from the UN system, Governments and donors. DFID participated as an observer and contributed with inputs on the topic, mainly through their three recently developed Guidance Notes on Theory of Change. The three guidance notes, among other material, also informed the background paper to the EGM.

26. DFID has played an active role in convening and supporting the preparatory processes leading up to CSW 57. UN Women participated in the UK Government's Preparatory Meeting for CSW57, organized by DFID (November 2012). Several Member States, members of the OECD/DAC GenderNet, NGO representatives and experts on VAWG explored strategies on how to further achieve successful outcomes ("agreed conclusions") of CSW 57. A follow-up meeting was subsequently organized in Denmark (January 2013) where DFID was also present.

VAWG WITHIN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT GOALS

27. DFID and UN Women have been consulting closely and regularly on the post-2015 development agenda and the centrality of gender equality to any goals that may be developed. UN Women aims to ensure that the post-2015 development framework fully integrates gender equality, in all its aspects, and acts as a strong vehicle for accelerating the achievement of the goal of gender equality. VAWG, one of the most serious human rights violations, was not included in the MDG framework. UN Women is therefore advocating for a substantive, stand-alone gender equality goal, that would address ending VAWG together with other dimensions

of gender equality and empowerment of women, as well as for the full integration of gender equality in all other goals through gender sensitive targets and indicators.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE DFID INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORT

28. **UK Prevention of Sexual Violence Initiative:** On 29 May 2012, Foreign Secretary William Hague announced a new initiative on preventing sexual violence in conflict (PSVI), aimed at providing political leadership to the issue of conflict-related sexual violence. UN Women has encouraged the PSVI to leverage this unique opportunity and contribute to addressing the multitude of gaps that currently exist in the sexual violence in conflict agenda rather than duplicate the limited number of existing initiatives. In particular, while rapid deployment of investigators and training of peacekeepers on the prevention of sexual violence are both established areas in need of funding to scale up, there are large scale gaps in areas such as longer-term justice sector reform in conflict-affected countries, reparations for survivors of sexual violence, and immediate provision of services to victims that need support.

29. There is equally a need to broaden the scope beyond just sexual violence in order to maximize impacts. This initiative could be an opportunity for the UK to engage the G8 on Women Peace and Security generally, and in particular women's peace leadership as a G8 priority, increasing the number of women as mediators and advisors, providing opportunities for women civil society to engage in peace making and providing an entry point to mobilize the G8 to support funding for women's organizations in conflict contexts. Through this initiative, DFID could provide funding to these key areas as well as channel funds to existing efforts to prevent and redress sexual violence in conflict, scaling up nascent but successful efforts.

In addition, DFID might consider the following for future interventions and support:

30. Consider a more long-term, systematic collaboration between DFID and UN Women in the area of VAWG to enable the development and implementation of a comprehensive VAWG programme and strategy, addressing prevention and response to various forms of VAWG and supporting cutting-edge pilot programmes in selected regions/countries to test different approaches and show the most effective ways for addressing VAWG in different socio-economic and political contexts.

31. In consultations with DFID, UN Women has stressed the challenges of *implementing* existing international normative frameworks and commitments for effectively addressing VAWG at national level. One major opportunity following the CSW 57 would be to support national *implementation* of the CSW "agreed conclusions" through specific technical assistance programmes at global, regional and country levels.

32. Explore means of identifying more feasible measures of programme success, especially in the context of prevention, in addition to advancing uptake of existing data collection and analysis instruments.

33. Encourage continuity of funding so as not to erase gains made at the country level, especially in supporting women's organizations at the grass roots level.

34. Actively involve UN Women into the DFID research and innovation initiative to start in 2013.

February 2013

Supplementary written evidence submitted by UN Women

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) supports inter-governmental bodies in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms; helps Member States to implement these standards; and holds the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality. One of its strategic areas of work is ending violence against women and girls. This includes tackling its main root: gender inequality. Efforts are multiplied through development of policies, advocacy campaigns, partnerships and programmes with governments, civil society and the UN system.

The United Kingdom was among the Member States who actively contributed to the establishment of UN Women and has translated its political commitment into continuous contributions to core resources as well as various UN Women programmes and projects, particularly in relation to violence against women and girls (VAWG), and peace and security work. DFID is one of the first development partners shifting towards a major focus on *prevention* of violence as a complementary, essential approach rather than limiting its support to response. DFID has played a key, strategic role in a variety of high level global meetings and events on VAWG, as well in the development of substantive theoretical guidance and forward-looking strategies which show DFID's clear leadership in this area.

Several examples of UN Women's programmes supported by DFID on violence, peace and security highlight the sustainability of the impact on the ground in terms of creation and institutionalization of systems, policies, procedures and mechanisms. The programmes promote holistic innovative approaches and implementation of relevant solutions, they are cost effectiveness and proven good practices to be up-scaled and expanded to other countries.

The UK Permanent Mission to the UN in New York also showed significant leadership in pushing forward the passage of the SC resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (SCR 1820, 1889, 1960), as well as consistently insisting on the integration of gender into other areas of the Security Council's programme of work.

The UK Government and DFID have been actively involved in the preparatory processes for the 57th Commission on the Status of Women which takes place in March 2013 in New York. The 57th CSW focuses on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. DFID and UN Women have been consulting closely and regularly on the post-2015 development agenda and the centrality of gender equality to any goals that may be developed. In relation to the UK Prevention of Sexual Violence Initiative launched in May 2012, UN Women has encouraged the PSVI to leverage this unique opportunity and contribute to addressing the multitude of gaps that currently exist in the sexual violence in conflict agenda and engage the G8 on women's peace leadership as a priority.

As a result, DFID might consider strengthening a long-term, systematic collaboration with UN Women in the area of violence, peace and security, to enable the development and implementation of comprehensive strategies, and involving UN Women in the DFID research and innovation initiative to start in 2013.

February 2013

Written evidence submitted by Dr Katherine Brickell, Lecturer in Human Geography, Royal Holloway, University of London

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While the last twenty years have seen unprecedented progress in the political attention paid to VAW, as well as in the number and scope of laws and policies that extend states' duty to prevent it, in all parts of the world, VAW persists (UNIFEM, 2010). It represents not only a fundamental barrier to eliminating poverty and building peace, but also impoverishes women, their families, communities and countries. VAW is also a key hindrance to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, namely MDG 3, to 'promote gender equality and empower women'.

Focus by the international development community has traditionally been placed on understanding the magnitude of VAW and has centred mainly on women as victims and survivors. Since 1994 however, a 'rights-based' approach has been adopted, concentrating not only on relieving poverty and suffering, but also on addressing their root causes. Despite this change in emphasis, stark challenges remain.

This submission outlines three (and inter-related) areas of concern that the UK government should act upon further in respect to VAW: legal reform; social norms; and the domestic sphere.

In sum, there is a policy need for VAW to become a cross-government agenda rather than being ghettoised in DFID. VAWG should be emphasised as part of a country's human rights record, which should become more central to the UK's diplomatic relationship with that state. The FCO is one such department then that could take a further lead in ensuring that 'VAWG is unacceptable under any social, political, economic and cultural circumstances at all levels' (DFID, 2012a page 3). UK Government pressure is also particularly required given DFID's assertion that 'The state has primary responsibility for action on violence against women and girls' (DFID 2012a: page 7).

CONTRIBUTOR

Dr Katherine Brickell is Lecturer in Human Geography, Royal Holloway, University of London. She is the Principal Investigator of a 3-year (Jan 2012-Dec 2014) research project relevant to the VAWG committee which is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)/Department for International Development (DFID) Joint Scheme for Research on International Development. It is entitled 'Lay and Institutional Knowledges of Domestic Violence Law: Towards Active Citizenship in Rural and Urban Cambodia'. The study concentrates on the 2005 'Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of the Victims' in Cambodia ('2005 DV law'). Cambodia is of relevance to other countries seeking to address weak law implementation, especially those who share a recent history of chronic conflict and dramatic socio-economic change. The research examines why investments in legal reform are faltering, and how these insights could shape the strategies adopted by programme and policy-makers. Evidence in this submission is based on substantial quantitative surveying (1,275 respondents) and community filmmaking in 2012. Large-scale interviewing is taking place from February 2013 onwards with the full suite of research evidence available in 2014. Dr Brickell also has broader experience in the field of VAWG, namely doctoral research (2007) on this topic, and PhD supervision of an ESRC funded collaborative study in Kenya by Mary Cobbett on empowering girls to claim rights through the non-formal education campaign 'Stop the Violence' run by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) (see http://www.wagggsworld.org/en/take_action/violence).

SUBMISSION

1. This submission outlines three (and inter-related) areas of concern that the UK government should act upon further in respect to VAW: legal reform; social norms; and the domestic sphere.

VAW AND LEGAL REFORM

2. In the DFID (2012a) 'Theory of Change' report (page 6) it is established that 'legal sanctions can be important in reducing violence against women and girls' yet 'legal reform is not on its own sufficient to prevent violence'.

A central policy area for DFID to pursue further is the hiatus between legal reform and transformative action for women.

3. Although women's rights organisations have done much to widen the scope of human rights to include VAW, the majority of women have no knowledge of their rights and no recourse to lay claim to them (Pickup *et al*, 2001).

4. At the same time, there is mounting and widespread concern that violations of women's human rights remain unrelenting even in countries where legislative changes and political campaigns have been introduced to address VAW (Hume, 2009 on El Salvador; Turbine, 2010 on Russia; Vetten, 2005 and Usdin *et al*, 2000 on South Africa).

5. Given the additional emphasis currently placed on legal reform for VAW reduction by international organisations (UNIFEM, 2009), it is imperative that policy makers respond to the hiatus between legal reform and change for women by concentrating more heavily on providing implementation support to foreign governments seeking to reduce VAW (via community paralegals for example).

6. Scholarly research, including my own, concurs with the statement written in the DFID (2012b) practical guide on page 23, 'Programmes to increase legal literacy and support women to cope with complex legal processes and plural legal systems are critical in overcoming the barriers that constrain women's access to justice'.

7. It is important not to forget in DFID programming, however, that even if women do have better knowledge and understanding of their rights in respect to VAW, gendered attitudes and responses of local authority, police and judicial officials who are charged with enforcing such laws too often render women's claims to justice illusory.

8. Too often institutional voices are framed, especially in policy circles, as dangerously un-gendered.

VAW AND SOCIAL NORMS

9. Despite an unprecedented incorporation of gender in policy circles, and a mounting groundswell of feminist activity at all levels of society, including an ever-larger number of South-based NGOs working on gender issues (Chant and Brickell, forthcoming), discriminatory norms remain stubbornly intact.

10. The DFID (2012a) publication identified that addressing norms is a necessary intervention to tackle VAWG. Yet there remains a paucity of policy initiatives on the long lasting codes of conduct, norms and traditions that determine gender outcomes.

11. Women and girls face vulnerabilities and disadvantages that emerge directly out of constructions of gender that reflect and condone gender injustice.

12. Norms have been identified as a critical yet missing element of work on gender equality in the developing world by the OECD (2010).

13. The UK government must focus more on the ideological, not just practical, challenges to translating interventions into actual change for women.

14. In Cambodia, for example, ESRC/DFID funded research shows how the symbolic value of the harmonious family is placed in national discourse over and above women's well-being in terms VAWG. This onus is habitually experienced by women on the ground who are repeatedly told to reconcile their relationships and not pursue punishment by law.

15. Article 1 in the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims (2005: 1) includes a clause, which defines its dual purpose: 'This law has the objective to prevent domestic violence, protect the victims and strengthen the culture of non-violence and the harmony within the households in society in the Kingdom of Cambodia. This law is in the purpose [sic.] to establish a legal mechanism to prevent domestic violence, protect the victims and preserve the harmony within the households in line with the Nation's good custom and tradition...'. As this clause indicates, there is a distinct tension here, between what is hallowed as a national culture and tradition of harmonious households, set against a law which has arisen conversely from the disharmonious realities that many women face. This is a trend not limited to Cambodia.

16. Research evidence shows that more focus needs to be placed on addressing the common ‘myths’ that are used to explain or justify VAW (Brickell, 2008). These, in themselves, have been normative (yet erroneous) ideas about why VAW occurs.

17. Poverty and alcohol have particular policy relevance as conditions seen by lay stakeholders as the ‘real’ causal factors influencing violent behaviour (Brickell, 2008).

18. Too often international agencies are complicit in blaming external agents as responsible for VAWG.

19. Feminist research has long emphasised that it is gender inequality and unequal power relations by men and women that explain VAW—NOT poverty or alcohol consumption.

20. The ESRC/DFID funded research found that the two leading (perceived) reasons for the occurrence of physical violence in the past 12 months were the victim not showing respect to the perpetrator (33% of all male and female respondents in the total sample contended this) and that the perpetrator was drunk (21.9%).

21. The ESRC/DFID research also showed that 28% of men and 43% of women in the total sample agreed that violence was excusable if the perpetrator was drunk. This suggests that almost half of the women surveyed tolerate violence committed by drunken perpetrators.

22. One of the major policy challenges is that changing gender cultures are a long-term process not instantly responsive to government policies and projects (Jackson, 2003).

23. The committee should confirm their commitment to long-term interventions (as deemed critical in the DFID 2012a report on page 9).

THE DOMESTIC SPHERE—WHERE POLICY MAKERS FEAR TO TREAD

24. Domestic violence is the most pervasive form of VAW in the developing world. The domestic sphere is therefore a, if not the, major site for VAW.

25. DV occurs within the context of intimate relationships and is thus sometimes referred to as ‘Intimate Partner Violence’ (IPV) or ‘Intimate Relationship Violence’ (IRV).

26. The ESRC/DFID findings show that 79% of physical violence and 84.8% of emotional violence against female victims in the total sample was perpetrated by spouses (only 1.9% and 4.5% respectively was perpetrated by adults outside of the household).

27. DV is often rhetorically addressed given that CEDAW-ratifying states are required ‘to take all steps to end violence against women’ and because violence was one of the twelve critical priorities of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA).

28. There have also been renewed calls through international campaigns such as UNiTE to End Violence Against Women which was launched in 2009.

29. Nevertheless, one major policy deficiency is that home and family are commonly regarded as ‘private spheres’ which form part of the ‘cultural fabric’ of society, and, as such, an undesirable object of interference on the part of state officials, development agencies, and especially Northern donors (Chant and Brickell, forthcoming).

30. While the World Bank’s flagship *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development*, has given some prominence to family laws and violence against women critiques, have been made that yet again, there is a damaging hesitance to broach households (Razavi, 2011).

31. The World Bank directly admit in the report (2011: 159) that, ‘Progress in improving laws has been slowest in areas that regulate relations within households. Many programs and policies seem to stop at the household’s doorstep and avoid interfering with relations within households’. DFID is not exempt from this charge.

32. Policy neglect is compounded particularly in country contexts where DV is cast as a ‘private’ matter.

33. In the ESRC/DFID research, 44% of men and 30% of women in the sample agreed that DV was a family matter that should be kept private.

34. While media attention is currently, and quite understandably, focusing on sexual violence in the public sphere, domestic violence should not be sidelined as a societal issue and government priority.

ATTACHMENT

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January 2013

Written evidence submitted by Womankind Worldwide

1. Womankind Worldwide works to transform the lives of women and girls around the world. For over twenty years we have partnered with women's rights organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America to support local, national and international efforts to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG). Our partners are specialists in this field and have years of experience of pioneering innovative approaches to prevent and respond to VAWG.

2. We therefore welcome the decision by the International Development Committee to conduct an inquiry into VAWG at a time when political will is high and there is enormous scope for change if the right approaches are used.

SUMMARY

3. The UK Government has shown strong leadership on tackling VAWG overseas, demonstrated by a number of new policy¹ and financial commitments² across the UK's international departments, as well as the appointment of Lynne Featherstone MP as the UK's Ministerial Champion for international VAWG. More recently, the expansion of DFID's programming on VAWG, reinforced by efforts to build the capacity of country offices to design and deliver programmes that are effective in addressing VAWG, have strengthened implementation of policy commitments. This has been matched by a commitment to increase attention to VAWG with other governments and in international spaces, in particular through efforts to ensure positive outcomes at the 57th UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2013.

4. While welcoming these significant advancements, Womankind would like to highlight a number of areas where DFID's response to VAWG can be strengthened further to consolidate the gains made. We will focus on four priority areas:

- a. Increasing the focus of DFID's programming on **addressing root causes of VAWG**—principally gender inequality and discriminatory social norms—in line with DFID's *Theory of Change on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls* and related guidance.
- b. Increasing **support for southern women's rights organisations**, recognising the unique and essential role they play in tackling VAWG.
- c. **Institutionalising VAWG more strongly across all areas of DFID's work** and strengthening DFID's coordination and leadership role on VAWG across the UK's international departments.
- d. Continuing to raise the profile of VAWG internationally, including **promoting the inclusion of a target on ending VAWG as part of a dedicated standalone goal on gender equality within the post-2015 framework**.

A summary of our recommendations can be found at the end of this submission.

Section A: Tackling the root causes of violence against women and girls

5. VAWG is widely recognised as a manifestation of unequal power relations between women and men—as being caused by, and reinforcing, gender inequality.³ This is formally acknowledged by a range of international and regional legal and policy frameworks.⁴ Eliminating VAWG cannot therefore be achieved without improving the status of women through economic, political and social empowerment of women and girls.⁵

6. This is explicitly recognised in DFID's *Theory of Change for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls*,⁶ which shows that interventions to empower women and girls are a prerequisite for effective violence prevention and response.

7. The *Theory of Change* also identifies social norms that condone VAWG and support male dominance and as a major barrier to effective VAWG prevention and response—for example, norms on the acceptability of wife beating. Changing these norms is another priority area of intervention proposed in the *Theory of Change*.

8. The announcement that the DFID's new VAWG Research and Innovation Fund will include a focus on prevention strategies is an opportunity to increase support for tackling social norms and women's empowerment. However, DFID's mapping of its existing VAWG programmes shows that **a relatively small proportion of DFID's programmes address social norms and women's empowerment**. The majority focus on building institutional capacity to respond to VAWG, primarily of formal security and justice sectors such as the police.

9. While investment in security and justice systems is critical—providing a building block for violence prevention as well as establishing accountability and redress⁷—evidence shows that better functioning institutions will have limited impact on *reducing* VAWG unless accompanied by efforts to tackle the root causes of violence—women's lack of power and discriminatory social norms.

10. Improving the functioning of security and justice institutions will also have limited impact if women and girls are unable to *access* these institutions due to social barriers. For example, the World Bank's *World Development Report 2012* shows that the main reasons given by women survivors of violence for not seeking help were a perception of violence as being normal and justified, and feeling embarrassed, guilty and ashamed.⁸ Research by the European Think Tank Fride revealed similar barriers to women accessing formal justice institutions in terms of lack of education, limited awareness of rights, social stigma, and lack of economic autonomy.⁹

11. As a result, most women do not seek justice and protection or have no choice but to rely on informal justice systems. For example, a study in Karnataka, India, showed that 80% of women reporting abuse said they went to the family for justice, *even though* 89% of the perpetrators were from within the family.¹⁰ Only 2% went to the police.

12. Effective violence prevention and response efforts therefore require a systematic focus on transforming social norms and empowering women and girls, as well as reforming institutions—as outlined in DFID's *Theory of Change*. Womankind recommends that a greater proportion of DFID's programming and funding for tackling VAWG should focus explicitly on tackling these root causes.

Section B: the unique and essential role of women's rights organisations in tackling VAWG

13. Efforts by DFID to generate new evidence to inform VAWG programming are welcome; however, it is important to acknowledge that there is an existing evidence and practice base.¹¹ Women's rights organisations have pioneered effective models for tackling VAWG and played a key role in innovation. For example, the community-based Stages of Change model for violence prevention, developed in Uganda by the NGO Raising Voices, is now used around the world. In Ethiopia, Womankind's partner KMG developed an effective approach for ending female genital mutilation (FGM) which has led to the abandonment of the annual public FGM ritual and a reduction from 97% to just 5% in people who said they would have their daughters cut. Innovations such as women's police stations and family courts were also initiated by women's rights organisations and are now adopted widely by security sector agencies and international bodies.

14. Recent research has reaffirmed the catalytic role that women's rights organisations play in ending VAWG. The four-decade research effort in 70 countries found that the mobilisation of women's organisations and movements is more important for combating violence against women than the wealth of nations, left-wing political parties, or the number of women politicians.¹² This was reemphasised at an Expert Group Meeting convened by the United Nations ahead of the 57th Commission on the Status of Women, where experts were unanimous in advising that effective prevention of VAWG requires the involvement of women's organisations.¹³ Moreover, research carried out by Womankind Worldwide and ActionAid¹⁴ in five fragile and conflict-affected countries showed that women's rights organisations at the grassroots level play important roles in mitigating conflict and building peace.¹⁵

15. However, despite their enormous added value, many women's rights organisations have not had the resources needed to take innovative models to scale. This is due to underfunding of women's rights organisations globally,¹⁶ and tiny amounts of money for work on VAWG, in particular a shortage of funding which commits beyond an annual cycle.

16. For example, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) data shows that just 1.3% of all DAC screened funds dedicated to gender equality in the 2010 budget went to women's rights organisations and women's ministries.¹⁷ Research by the Association of Women's Rights in Development (AWID) in its 2011 survey of women's organisations from over 140 countries found that only one-tenth of the organisations received funding from bilateral, national governments and INGOs.¹⁸ These findings are reflected in Womankind's own research report *From the Ground Up*,¹⁹ which shows that women's organisations across five fragile countries widely reported a lack of adequate funding.

DFID's support for women's rights organisations

17. **Support for women's rights organisations is one of the seven key principles underlying DFID's Theory of Change on Tackling VAWG:** 'Women's rights organisations create and sustain change: supporting women's rights organisations, especially those working to tackle violence against women and girls, to make change and build strong and inclusive social movements is the most effective mechanism for ensuring sustainable change in the lives of women and girls.' 2012: 11

18. However it is not clear how effectively DFID is implementing this principle into practice. The purpose code '*Women's equality organisations and institutions*' is used in reporting to the OECD Creditor Reporting System and as a sector code within DFID's online project database. It tracks support to women's organisations and ministries. **In 2011, UK aid activities reported under this purpose code amounted to just USD 16.41 million compared with USD 118.6 million in the Netherlands, USD 82.15 million in Norway, USD 58.49 million in Spain, USD 50.52 million in Sweden and USD 24.13 in Denmark.**

19. Moreover, although the information is difficult to access, Womankind's research suggests that **very few southern-based women's organisations are direct recipients of DFID's centralised funds.** For example, only one southern women's rights organisation, Gender Links, is funded under the PPA fund and there were no direct grants to Southern Women's Rights Organisations under the Civil Society Challenge Fund. We could find no evidence that DFID provides support to women's funds.

Innovative models for funding women's organisations

20. DFID's new Research and Innovation Fund has the potential to change this by ensuring that funds are accessible to southern women's rights organisations. There are various models of best practice for funding women's rights organisations that DFID should adopt, briefly outlined below.

21. **Women's Funds** have a critical role in funding organisations considered too small or risky by the mainstream.²⁰ There are a number of well-established women's funds which are experienced in administering grants to women's rights organisations,²¹ several of which prioritise VAWG.²² There are major benefits to channelling money through women's funds: they support core costs; are increasingly providing multiyear funding so that organisations can make long-term plans; allow simplified grants application, monitoring and reporting processes; are able to reach small, remote and minority organisations; and enable large grant-makers such as bi-lateral donors to sub-contract the partnership and administrative workload.

22. **Special donor funds and budget lines dedicated to women's rights** are also being successfully used by bi-lateral agencies. For example, **the MDG3 Fund** set up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands provided support to women's rights organisations.²³ Of the 45 grantees, 35 were women's organisations (including women's funds), and received 44 million Euros.²⁴ VAWG was one of four funding areas.

23. Womankind recommends that DFID should more generously resource women's rights organisations, recognising their enormous value in tackling VAWG. In particular, DFID should:

- Embed a commitment to supporting women's rights organisations across VAWG policy, programming and funding.

- Increase devolved funding for VAWG through women’s funds that have partnerships with southern women’s rights organisations, including those with strong links with the grassroots level of civil society and those supporting women’s human rights defenders.
- Consider setting up dedicated funds for southern women’s rights organisations working on VAWG, drawing on the positive aspects of the MDG3 funding model.
- Ensure at least 15% of peacebuilding funds (eg the Conflict Pool, co-managed by DFID, FCO and MOD) are dedicated to tackling VAWG, advancing gender equality and promoting women’s participation in peace processes, in line with the United Nations target.²⁵
- Increase the accessibility of existing funding streams to women’s rights organisations by simplifying grants application, monitoring and reporting processes in line with recommendations proposed by the DAC Network on Gender Equality.²⁶
- Develop more effective systems for tracking how much money is spent on VAWG and who receives this funding—including how much reaches southern women’s rights organisations, directly and indirectly.

Section C: Strengthening capacity, coordination and leadership for the long-term

24. **DFID’s work on VAWG is ambitious but is currently siloed within DFID and institutionalisation across the organisation is weak.** Womankind’s experience suggests that the extent to which VAWG is prioritised by country offices depends on the individual commitment of country office staff rather than being embedded in a systematic way. DFID staff across the board should be expected to ensure their work contributes to tackling VAWG.

25. Investment in building staff expertise on VAWG is important in this regard. We have welcomed DFID’s efforts to expand its capacity on VAWG; however, the focus has been on buying in external expertise rather than building capacity *in-house*. This is likely to be less effective in forging the longer term commitment and capacity of staff across the organisation to address VAWG. Useful lessons can be learnt from the success of DFID’s former Gender Equality Action Plan, which was widely recognised as making significant progress on integrating gender across the organisation through capacity-building, awareness-raising and the introduction of incentives for performance on gender.

26. Clarity is also needed on how DFID is ensuring that work on VAWG across the three international departments (FCO, MoD, DFID) is aligned and supports and reinforces each other, particularly in light of the range of strategies and initiatives that exist to address VAWG. In particular, DFID has a critical role to play in keeping the VAWG agenda broad. At a time when certain forms of VAWG—notably sexual violence—are high on the UK’s international agenda, DFID needs to ensure that other forms of VAWG that have equally devastating effects for women and girls, such as domestic violence, remain a priority.

27. Whilst the **Foreign Secretary’s Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative** is a welcome opportunity to put this issue on the agenda of the G8 and call for global action, it has been unclear how DFID’s work fits in, and how communication and joint-working between the departments is happening in practice. For instance, when the initiative was first announced, the FCO team responsible for its development had not seen DFID’s *Theory of Change on VAWG*. Any efforts to increase prosecution and tackle impunity must include work to increase access to basic services. DFID needs to play a pro-active role in ensuring that the work of the FCO builds on and complements the existing expertise of DFID’s work in this area (see the GADN submission for more detail).

28. Womankind recommends that DFID should:

- a. Strengthen institutionalisation of VAWG across the organisation, including by building in-house capacity of DFID staff to deliver on commitments to VAWG and ensuring that staff leading on VAWG have sufficient seniority and resources to have real influence. This is critical for ensuring the focus on VAWG is maintained in the longer-term.
- b. Ensure that VAWG is included as a core consideration across all DFID-funded programmes through a requirement that all funding proposals demonstrate how they will address and mitigate the potential risks of VAWG in their programme design, implementation and monitoring—not only programmes where VAWG is a primary objective.
- c. Continue to promote a broad VAWG agenda, with a strong focus on tackling domestic as well as sexual violence, in so-called ‘peaceful’ as well as fragile and conflict-affected settings.

Section D: Looking forward—the international agenda

29. The UK continues to be a powerful development champion internationally, with the influence to raise the profile of VAWG with governments overseas and in international spaces. We have welcomed the priority that DFID has placed on working in partnership with other governments to ensure the 57th Commission on the Status of Women has strong agreed conclusions that protect existing agreed human rights commitments. We hope this commitment will be sustained beyond the CSW meeting, including through efforts to **promote the inclusion of a specific target on ending violence against women and girls as part of a dedicated standalone goal on gender equality within the post-2015 framework**. This would reflect the priorities of women’s rights organisations globally.²⁷

Section E: Summary of recommendations for the International Development Committee to consider

DFID should:

30. Prioritise support to programmes that address root causes of VAWG, ie gender inequality and discriminatory social norms, in line with DFID's Theory of Change on VAWG and related guidance.

31. More generously resource women's rights organisations working on VAWG by:

- a. Embedding a commitment to actively supporting women's rights organisations across VAWG policy, programming and funding.
- b. Increasing devolved funding for VAWG through women's funds that have partnerships with southern women's rights organisations, including those with strong links with the grassroots level of civil society and those supporting women's human rights defenders.
- c. Considering setting up dedicated funds for southern women's rights organisations working on VAWG, drawing on the positive aspects of the MDG3 funding model.
- d. Ensuring that at least 15% of peacebuilding funds (eg the Conflict Pool, co-managed by DFID, FCO and MOD) should be dedicated to tackling VAWG, advancing gender equality and promoting women's participation in peace processes, in line with the United Nations target.
- e. Increasing the accessibility of existing funding streams to women's rights organisations by simplifying grants application, monitoring and reporting processes in line with recommendations proposed by the DAC Network on Gender Equality.²⁸
- f. Developing more effective systems for tracking how much money is spent on VAWG and who receives this funding—including how much reaches southern women's rights organisations, directly and indirectly. This should include tracking all aid using the DAC Gender Equality Marker.

31. Strengthen institutionalisation of VAWG across the organisation by:

- a. Building in-house capacity of DFID staff to deliver on commitments to VAWG and ensuring that staff leading on VAWG have sufficient seniority and resources to have real influence.
- b. Ensuring that VAWG is included as a core consideration across all DFID-funded programmes by requiring that all funding proposals demonstrate how they will address and mitigate the potential risks of VAWG in their programme design, implementation and monitoring—not only programmes where VAWG is a primary objective.
- c. Promoting a broad and holistic VAWG agenda, with a strong focus on tackling domestic violence as well as sexual violence, and working in so-called 'peaceful' as well as fragile and conflict-affected settings.

33. Continue to be a powerful international champion of ending VAWG, including promoting the inclusion of a specific target on ending violence against women and girls as part of a dedicated standalone goal on gender equality within the post-2015 framework.

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23. Examples include:—Mama Cash, the Africa Women's Development Fund, the Global Fund for Women, the Central American Women's Fund, the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, and the Young Feminist Fund FRIDA
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January 2013

Written evidence submitted by WaterAid

1. SUMMARY

1.1 WaterAid works to transform lives by improving access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in the world's poorest communities. We work with partners in 27 countries in Africa, Asia, Central America and the Pacific region, and influence decision-makers to maximise our impact.

1.2 A core part of WaterAid's work is empowering women to have a voice within their communities. The link between a lack of access to water and sanitation facilities and sexual violence against women and girls has received insufficient attention to date.

2. *There is a link between a lack of access to water and sanitation facilities and violence against women and girls.*

2.1 Globally, 2.5 billion people lack access to adequate sanitation facilities, and over 780 million lack access to safe drinking water; the magnitude of this problem is felt most keenly by women and girls because they experience greater vulnerability as a result of inadequate and/or unsafe WASH facilities.

2.2 The enormous burden associated with collecting water is mainly shouldered by women (64%) and girls (8%). The Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP) estimates that in 14 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, more than a quarter of the population takes longer than 30 minutes to make one trip to collect water,¹ and recent WaterAid research in rural Ethiopia shows that women spend up to nine hours per day collecting water in the dry season.² Women and girls forced to collect water from remote sources, often very early in the morning or late at night, are at much greater risk of sexual harassment and attack.

2.3 In many cultures, women who lack access to safe sanitation facilities may end up waiting until it is dark to go to the toilet, have to walk long distances to find an isolated spot in the open, or use public amenities. This exposes them to an increased risk of sexual harassment and attack, as well as causing shame.

2.4 Findings from a WaterAid and SHARE Research Consortium-supported study in Kampala, Uganda, indicate that women feel particularly vulnerable in and around public toilets or defecating out in the open. In particular, women reported feeling that inadequate sanitation facilities threatened their safety by exposing them to the risk of rape and attack when travelling to communal latrines after dark. One described how women do “not feel safe walking to the toilet. Men rape women there at night”.³

2.5 In another WaterAid and SHARE Research Consortium-supported study in two slum districts in Delhi, India, women reported specific incidents of girls under ten being raped while on their way to use public toilets.⁴ In separate work carried out by WaterAid in Bhopal, India, 94% of the women interviewed said that they had faced violence or harassment when going out to defecate, and more than a third had been physically assaulted.⁵

2.6 A poll commissioned by WaterAid revealed that 40% of women in the slums of Lagos, Nigeria, have no toilets and are forced to defecate outside. A quarter of these had either first or second hand experience of harassment, a threat of violence or actual assault in the last 12 months.⁶

2.7 An Amnesty International report looked into this issue and reported that women and girls in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya, were staying away from communal toilet facilities at night because of fear of physical violence and rape. It reported similar findings in the slums of the Solomon Islands. One woman described being severely beaten and raped by two men after relieving herself in the sea.⁷

2.8 A United Nations Development Programme report also highlighted these risks. It states that the need to travel further from home to secure the family’s water can expose women and girls to sexual harassment and rape and that this can also happen when women who lack safe, nearby sanitation facilities move about at night in search of privacy.⁸

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 More than 1 in 3 (1.25 billion) women in the world lack access to safe sanitation.⁹ Of these, 526 million women have no choice but to go to the toilet out in the open.¹⁰ **Access to safe water and sanitation facilities should be an important consideration in DFID programmes on prevention of violence against women and girls and DFID should foster increased dialogue and co-ordination between the gender and WASH areas of technical expertise to facilitate this.**

3.2 While we reference above some research and documentation regarding the link between WASH and violence against women and girls, the issue has largely been overlooked.¹¹ **DFID should ensure that a proportion of the £25 million research fund on violence against women and girls is invested in further research in this area.**

3.3 At current rates of progress, it will be over 165 years before Sub-Saharan Africa meets its sanitation Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target, and another 350 years before universal access is achieved.¹² For South Asia, it will be over 25 years before it meets its sanitation MDG target, and nearly 70 years to get universal access at current rates of progress.

3.3.1 Post 2015 goals or targets whose achievement can be influenced by access to water and sanitation, such as in relation to violence against women, women’s empowerment, gender equity in education, and women’s and maternal health, should include water and sanitation related success indicators.

3.3.2 To support this, DFID should strongly encourage UK attendance and full participation in the 57th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women to highlight the relevance of WASH issues to violence against women and girls. This will be a key forum to debate the issue in the context of the post-2015 framework.

3.4 DFID’s Theory of Change on violence against women and girls doesn’t currently make reference to the role that inadequate and unsafe domestic or community facilities can have on the vulnerability of women and girls. Neither does it reference the importance of consulting with women and girls regarding the provision of

community or domestic infrastructure such as water and sanitation facilities. This omission could result in this vital issue being overlooked in DFID programming and best practice. **DFID should review their Theory of Change on violence against women and girls to consider the role that domestic and community infrastructure such as water and sanitation facilities have in tackling the issue.**

January 2013

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Written evidence submitted by World Vision UK

World Vision welcomes the commitment by DFID to ending violence against women and girls. We supports global and UK Government initiatives to empower women in peace-building and combating sexual and gender based violence in conflict and humanitarian emergencies. World Vision is encouraged by the cooperation between DFID and the FCO on the Prevention of Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI), and recognises the evidence of this collaborative approach recently, for example through sharing knowledge of the local context in Syria.

Preventing gender based and sexual violence requires a holistic approach, with the prosecutions that make up the PSVI a key element of this but not the only one. Sustainable and effective prevention requires building a protective environment—including changing the attitudes that allow sexual violence to occur, that create a culture of impunity, and that fail to prioritise the availability of services that meet the needs of survivors.

DFID's 'A Theory of Change for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls' rightly recognises the erosion of protection systems, social structures and infrastructure, the breakdown of social norms and support networks in humanitarian crises, highlighting how this increases women's and children's vulnerability to violence. However, this understanding is not reflected in DFID's policy commitments to action. Preventing sexual and other forms of violence—including early and forced marriage—requires targeted investment in human security and protection systems. DFID's Theory of Change recognises that transforming attitudes is a long term process beyond the timescale for the action plan. This understanding must translate across all Whitehall initiatives to tackling protection issues which require a long term approach beyond government terms and funding cycles and necessitate a funding commitment to protection and child protection as a vital aspect of humanitarian response.

Prevention of violence against children is an integral part of all World Vision's protection programming. World Vision lead on Protection at the Global Cluster level. This submission will explore the extent to which children are vulnerable to violence within conflict-affected and fragile states. Drawing on the experiences and expertise of World Vision staff globally, our evidence will show the prevalence of early marriage as a response to the threat of gender-based and sexual violence in fragile contexts, as well as other, key factors that facilitate early marriage as a form of violence against women and girls.

1. CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE TO VIOLENCE DURING CONFLICT

1.1 Children and youth constitute more than 50% of the populations of conflict-affected countries. As of 2010, over 1 billion children worldwide lived in countries or territories affected by armed conflict.⁹⁶ Internal conflicts affect children more acutely than any other demographic. UN OCHA estimates that children account for roughly half of the 26 million people currently displaced by armed conflict and violence. In the modern world of conflict, more than 90% of casualties are civilians and almost half of these are children.⁹⁷ War, extreme poverty, recurrent natural disasters, political volatility, migration, displacement and unreliable economic conditions create fear and anxiety that leaves children—both boys and girls—particularly exposed to violence and abuse.

1.2 Children are exposed to high levels of violence in fragile contexts, before, during and after conflict, which can significantly impact their beliefs, behaviours, future opportunities and aspirations. Not only is the protection of children from violence a most basic human right, it is also essential for the prevention of recurring violence. The long term impacts of violent conflict on children impact the emotional, physical, psychological health and wellbeing of a generation. Beliefs, practices and habits that foster violence easily become deeply embedded and can fuel repeated conflict unless addressed. Every civil war that began since 2003 was a resumption of a previous civil war and the majority of conflicts re-emerge within 10 years of a ceasefire.⁹⁸

1.3 We applaud the Secretary of State for International Development for highlighting the link between conflict and humanitarian crises, the dramatic increases in physical and sexual violence as a result, and for recognising the lack of funding dedicated to addressing it.⁹⁹ Indeed, protection is always underfunded. For example, the UN OCHA Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) 2012 for Mali identified a relatively small requirement of US \$17.71 million. Only US\$ 6.51 (37%) was contributed.¹⁰⁰ **World Vision therefore recommends that DFID commit an increased proportion of funding to protection and child protection in emergencies.**

1.4 World Vision commends the work lead by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the Prevention of Sexual Violence Initiative, and calls for joined up working across Whitehall to remain prioritised across the UKs work on tackling violence against women and girls. **We ask the UK to produce a cross-Whitehall strategy to reduce sexual violence in conflict and to leverage their international influence to ensure that all G8 countries do the same.**

2. EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE IN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES AND CONFLICT

2.1 Early and forced marriage (EFM) is one of the greatest threats to the protection of women and girls today, with 13.5 million girls around the world marrying before their eighteenth birthday.¹⁰¹ A substantial body of evidence suggests that early marriage often increases in the immediate aftermath of conflict. Rates of early marriage tend to be high where poverty, birth and death rates are high; where civil conflict is commonplace; and where there are lower overall levels of development, including schooling, healthcare and employment.¹⁰² Additionally, children living in disaster-prone or fragile states, such as Niger or Somalia, are more likely to marry young. The absence of social protection and the breakdown of informal protection and welfare networks in fragile states contribute to an environment in which parents consider early marriage for their daughters as the best means of protection.

2.2 Natural disasters and slow onset emergencies such as drought provoke the same response in parents to marry off their daughters as a perceived means of protection. Following the tsunami of 2004, early marriage and other forms of sexualised violence increased in Indonesia. Families in refugee camps saw early marriage as the only protection for their daughters against the threat of rape.¹⁰³ According to World Vision data gathered in Bangladesh, 62% of the total number of children under 18 married in the last 5 years were married in the 12 months following Cyclone Sidr in 2007. The insecurity of camp life, combined with the lack of opportunities for girls to enter the protective school environment, meant that more adolescent girls were married.

2.3 Communities across the globe naturally fear for the increased insecurity brought on by conflict and emergencies, anticipating a rise in rape and sexual violence. Rape and other forms of sexual violence against children is recognised by the UN as one of six categories of grave violations against children. Communities are right to fear, since women and girls *do* suffer disproportionately; and children know this too. Girls and women who lack the protective network of family and community are at even greater risk of experiencing violence, abuse and exploitation. During recent World Vision surveys in the Democratic Republic of Congo

⁹⁶ Cecile Aptel and Virginie Ladisch (2011) *Through a New Lens: A child-sensitive approach to transitional justice*. International Centre for Transitional Justice, p. 5.

⁹⁷ United Nations (1996) *Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children: Impact of armed conflict on children*, Graça Machel, 1996.

⁹⁸ World Development Report (2011)

⁹⁹ Justine Greening (2012), 'Eliminating violence against women and girls' published speech, 28 November 2012, marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls, New York USA <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/News/Speeches-and-statements/2012/Justine-Greening-Eliminating-violence-against-women-and-girls/>

¹⁰⁰ UN OCHA (2012) MALI CAP 2012: Cluster Funding (12 September 2012)

¹⁰¹ UNFPA (2012) *Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage* New York: UNFPA, p.44.

¹⁰² UNICEF (2011) *State of the World's Children*

¹⁰³ Feltan Bierman, C. (2006) 'Gender and Natural Disaster: Sexualized violence and the tsunami,' *Development* 46 (3)

and in Sierra Leone, children identified sexual violence and exploitation, rooted in conflict, as the biggest threat to their protection. Adolescent girls suffer not only from the by-products of war, but have also been targeted with torture, rape, mass rape, forced prostitution, forced marriage, forced termination of pregnancy and mutilation in countries including Somalia, Afghanistan and Uganda.¹⁰⁴ Such strategies are designed to humiliate the enemy, weaken families and break down the social fabric of communities and societies. They rely on lack of law enforcement and weak community protection structures.

2.4 In some communities affected by violent conflict and emergencies, one of the more perverse responses to the rape of girls is to ensure they are married to the perpetrator. World Vision research in Chad, Niger and Andean countries¹⁰⁵ has found marriage deployed as a protective response for rape survivors. In Somaliland, where there was a surge in rape cases in 2010,¹⁰⁶ religious and local leaders, parents and children informed us that marriage took place to protect girls from shame. The drought currently affecting Somaliland means that girls, with no chance of attending school, are having to walk longer distances to fetch water, firewood or to look after livestock in often hazardous and insecure areas. Girls in Somaliland tell World Vision staff that rape is a huge fear for young girls whose lives were affected by the drought. World Vision have found that the fear of rape can be so acute in a crisis that parents will often resort to early marriage for their daughters as a perceived protection from the threat. Fear of so-called 'illegal pregnancies' resulting from rape or from premarital sex were cited as a key push factor, in addition to the shame of engaging in pre-marital sex, despite resulting from rape. In discussions with World Vision staff, adults and children repeatedly identify the threat of sexual violence as a major cause of early marriage.

2.5 Anxiety and fear surrounding the sexual security of girls means that girls as young as 8 or 9 years may be married off to safeguard them against 'immoral' behaviour. The shame of pregnancy outside marriage is such that parents tell World Vision that they would rather take the risks involved with early marriage than face the shame attributed to girls who are seen as being sexually active before they are married. In Somaliland, girls who've engaged in premarital sex which has led to pregnancy are mistreated by local communities as a source of shame. As a result, many single mothers often end up in urban areas seeking work and lacking the protective network of the wider community. These women and girls are doubly vulnerable to gender-based and sexual violence as a result of both the threats in their environment and the lack of any protection available to them, either formal or informal.

2.6 In many fragile and emergency contexts, including Somaliland and Niger, World Vision has found that where girls are not attending school, they are often married off to protect them from the risk of shame that comes with premarital sex. There are myriad reasons why girls might not be in school ranging from inaccessibility, weak infrastructure, internal and external threats of violence, to poor quality education, lack of resources and under-qualified staff. In Bangladesh in 2007, many schools remained closed in the weeks and months after Cyclone Sidr. A study by the Government of Bangladesh found that the loss of the academic year meant that it became 'very common' for adolescent girls to be forced into marriage without their consent.¹⁰⁷ Girls in Somaliland tell World Vision staff that the immediate alternative to schooling for them is marriage which ensures their respectability and safeguards their honour, where this is considered threatened if they are neither busy in school nor busy in the home. Girls who failed their primary certificate (mostly as a result of inexperienced teachers and limited access to books) in Niger say that they were often married early instead of continuing their education. **Programme evaluation must include indicators that measure more than the enrolment rate of girls in schools if equal access to quality education is going to be achieved.**

2.7 World Vision recommends that early marriage prevention mechanisms be mainstreamed into the UK's emergency and humanitarian responses. Furthermore, we recommend that girls at high risk of dropping out of school due to early marriage be directly targeted, along with their families and communities, by programmes to improve access to education.

3. THE IMPACT OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

3.1 Those who marry early are more likely to experience domestic violence, abuse and forced sexual relations. Early marriage forces girls into responsibilities for which they lack the emotional and physical maturity to cope. Women who marry young are more likely to be beaten or threatened and to believe that their husband might be justified in beating or raping them.¹⁰⁸ In Niger, World Vision have come across several cases where girls were beaten for refusing sex to their husbands meaning that refusal of sex is rarely, if ever, an option for girls or women. Dowry violence is a recognised consequence of early marriage in south Asia. When parents fail to produce the promised dowry for their newly married daughters, girls are often beaten, tortured and, on occasion, killed.¹⁰⁹ Although many parents and young women report that marriage is used as a strategy

¹⁰⁴ Human Rights Watch (2012) *No Place For Children: Child Recruitment, Forced Marriage and Attacks on Schools in Somalia* New York: HRW, February. World Vision US *Before She's Ready*, 2008 Carlson, K., & Mazurana, D., (2008) 'Forced Marriage Within The Lord's Resistance Army, Uganda,' Feinstein International Centre.

¹⁰⁵ REDLAMYC Coalition, *South America Regional Mapping: Implementation of the Recommendations of the World Report on Violence Against Children* 2012 Unpublished paper.

¹⁰⁶ See <http://somalilandpress.com/somaliland-police-reveal-2010-annual-crimes-surge-in-rape-murder-19050>

¹⁰⁷ Government of Bangladesh (2009) *Climate Change, Gender and Vulnerable Groups in Bangladesh*, Climate Change Cell, Department of Environment

¹⁰⁸ Jenson, R., & Thornton, R., (2003) 'Early Female Marriage in the Developing World' *Gender and Development* 11:2.

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/86100/BANGLADESH-Dowry-violence-continues-unabated>

to protect girls from the threat of rape and sexual violence in fragile contexts, the stresses created by insecurity, by marriage itself, by immaturity and lack of negotiating power, mean that girls end up more exposed to abuse, including marital rape.

3.2 Those who marry early are more likely to experience reduced levels of sexual and reproductive health. A girl growing up in Chad today is more likely to die in childbirth than she is to attend school.¹¹⁰ Complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the main causes of death among adolescent girls ages 15–19 years old in developing countries.¹¹¹ Problems such as obstructed labour can lead to chronic disabilities including fistula. Such deaths and debilitating conditions could be averted with access to essential maternity and basic healthcare services. These are sadly often weak or even non-existent in many fragile contexts. Problems can be further compounded by entrenched gender inequity and discrimination that manifests in poor human and systems capacity. In Somaliland, for example, NGO workers complained that girls are routinely refused medical treatment by male staff whose attitudes towards women are so discriminatory that patients often return home without any care at all. Time and again, girls voice that their access to health and protection services is compromised or blocked because of weak state capacity.

3.3 Marriage is a violation of children's rights and a brutal curtailment of childhood. The impacts of early marriage on the lives of child spouses can be catastrophic, extending into adulthood and having long term, intergenerational effects on families and societies. Early marriage poses a serious challenge to extremely hard-won development gains in least developed countries. Early marriage often condemns girls to a life of serious ill-health, illiteracy, chronic and often extreme poverty. Many girls amongst the communities we work with in Bangladesh report that girls who are married are often taken away from their families, friends and communities, forced into social isolation without access to support networks that might help them to cope with the physical and emotional challenges of marriage.

3.4 World Vision calls on the UK Government to demonstrate global leadership in committing to ending early marriage by 2030, specifically through a public commitment by the UK Prime Minister to this global campaign. Additionally, World Vision recommends that early marriage be a priority issue in the Government's Human Rights Agenda.

4. FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING AS A FORM OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

4.1 Female Genital Cutting (FGC) is a widespread form of violence carried out against women and girls in numerous countries worldwide, whether affected by conflict, fragility, or not. Although the practice is not linked to any one religion or culture, traditional conservative gender norms predominantly lie at the root of this practice and are linked to women's value and fears around their sexual security. In Somaliland, FGC ranges from full infibulation to pricking or cutting (known as *Sunna*) and is closely linked to early marriage.¹¹² Girls who have experienced *Sunna* are often considered more physically 'sensitive' and are therefore urged to marry young to avoid the temptations of premarital sex. Somali girls who have not undergone infibulation report fears of being seen as 'undesirable' as a result and so are keen to marry young to prove their appeal, value and respectability. This is especially the case in rural areas. Ironically, sustained campaigns which have successfully reduced FGC have inadvertently created a fear of 'illegal' (ie premarital) pregnancy which has pushed girls in to early marriage.

4.2 World Vision recommends that the UK address harmful practices such as FGM/C through an holistic approach to insure that the decrease in prevalence of the practice of infibulations does not contribute to a rise in early marriage.

5. SUMMARY OF WORLD VISION RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Only by focusing on rebuilding the lives of children and giving them opportunities and hope for the future can cycles of conflict be effectively broken. Only by protecting children can the impact of violence in conflict be tackled. The Secretary of State for International Development has noted the increase in instances of sexual and physical violence against women and girls in crises. **World Vision recommends that there be an increased proportion of donor funding to protection and child protection in emergencies.**

5.2 We ask the UK to produce a strategy to reduce sexual violence in conflict and to leverage their international influence to ensure that all G8 countries do the same. Early and forced marriage must be a priority issue in the Government's Human Rights Agenda if global development goals are to be met sustainably.

5.3 Specific early marriage prevention mechanisms must be mainstreamed into the UK's emergency and humanitarian responses in recognition of the prevalence of early marriage as a form of violence against women and girls that intensifies during crises. Alternative means of protection for girls and women at risk of violence and abuse are essential to tackling the growing prevalence of early and forced marriage.

¹¹⁰ <http://50.usaid.gov/infographic-saving-moms-at-birth/savingatbirth-1000/?size=infographicMedium>

¹¹¹ WHO (2011) *Preventing Early Pregnancy and Poor Reproductive Health Outcomes Among Adolescents In Developing Countries*, WHO Guidelines, WHO Press Geneva

¹¹² FGC is a pervasive practice across the whole of Somalia with UNICEF's *State of the World's Children 2012* recording 98% of girls and women aged 15–49 years old have been mutilated or cut.

5.4 School environments that are safe from the threat of violence can be both protective and preventative of violence against women and girls. **World Vision recommends a greater focus on equal access to quality education through the adaptation of DFID's current indicators, where the current focus on enrolment rate of girls in schools does not measure the access of girl students to resources, support and safety required to sustain their enrolment.**

5.5 **World Vision urges the UK Government to address harmful practices such as FGM/C through an holistic approach to ensure that the decrease in prevalence of infibulation does not contribute to a rise in early marriage.** World Vision commends DFID on its focus to tackle early pregnancy and urges DFID to ensure this is done alongside programmes that tackle early marriage, in recognition of the link between age at marriage and age at first pregnancy.

January 2013

Written evidence submitted by International Planned Parenthood

1. Women and girls who become pregnant following rape in armed conflict and emergency settings are classified as persons "wounded and sick" and therefore entitled protection and non-discriminatory medical care under international humanitarian law (IHL) and the Geneva Conventions. Yet despite IHL's clear requirements, as well as the indisputable health- and life-risking consequences of forced childbirth on one hand and unsafe abortion on the other, raped women and girls in conflict zones are routinely denied the option of abortion, leaving them with the "choice" of risking an unsafe abortion, suicide, or being forced to bear the child of their rapists.¹ Denying a rape victim an abortion does not only contravene the medical care guarantees and prohibition on gender discrimination but constitutes torture and cruel treatment in violation of IHL.

2. IPPF calls on the US government to fulfil its obligation to ensure humanitarian aid is provided in full compliance of IHL; treating women and girls impregnated by war rape without discrimination and providing them with complete medical services including safe abortion when medically necessary. The right at stake is not a right to abortion; it is the inalienable right of all persons "wounded and sick" in armed conflicts, including women, to life and health saving medical care.

7 May 2013

REFERENCES

¹ <http://www.globaljusticecenter.net> Prof. Louise Doswald-Beck, leading expert on International Humanitarian Law, calls on President Obama to end US abortion restrictions on aid to war rape victims (Accessed on 7 May 2013)

Written evidence submitted on behalf of the Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport, Scottish Government

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION: THE SITUATION IN SCOTLAND

SUMMARY

The Scottish Government views FGM as a serious violation of the human rights of women and girls, a form of physical and child abuse under the guise of culture and/or religion, and a form of violence against women. We are working closely with relevant agencies, professionals, communities and other key partners to bring an end to this intolerable crime. We estimate that there are around 3,000 women living in Scotland who come from countries where FGM has high prevalence.

FGM has been unlawful in Scotland since 1985. The Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005 re-enacted the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 and extended protection by making it a criminal offence to have FGM carried out either in Scotland or abroad by giving those offences extra-territorial powers. The Act also increased the penalty on conviction on indictment from 5 to 14 years' imprisonment.

To date there have been three reported incidents of FGM in Scotland, with no prosecutions or court convictions. The lack of cases does not mean that the Government is complacent and we use a number of methods to encourage the reporting of FGM. Furthermore, the Scottish Government tackles FGM through a multi-agency approach and through a variety of preventative and supportive interventions, involving voluntary and community groups and encouraging links with relevant statutory bodies such as the police, health, social services and education to ensure that issues around FGM remain in focus.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Scottish Government has compiled this report in response to a request from the House of Commons International Development Committee to provide written evidence about the Scottish Government's position on Female Genital Mutilation in Scotland.

2. THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

2.1 The Scottish Government is committed to creating a modern, inclusive Scotland that protects, respects and realises the human rights of all our citizens. The Government recognises the human rights implications of FGM and considers it as a serious violation of the human rights of women and girls and a form of physical and child abuse under the guise of culture and/or religion, as well as a form of violence against women.

2.2 FGM has been unlawful in Scotland since 1985 according to the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985, but it was not an offence in Scots law to send a person abroad to have FGM carried out. The Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005 re-enacted the 1985 Act and extended protection by making it a criminal offence to have FGM carried out either in Scotland or abroad by giving those offences extra-territorial powers. The Act also increased the penalty on conviction on indictment from 5 to 14 years' imprisonment.

2.3 The European Convention of Human Rights is embedded within the Scotland Act and the Human Rights Act places a duty upon public bodies to be compliant with the Act in delivering their functions.

2.4 The Scottish Government is engaging with the Scottish Human Rights Commission and others to develop Scotland's first National Action Plan for Human Rights. The level of active engagement by all those with an interest is a demonstration of the progressive dialogue within Scotland about how to achieve greater protection, respect for and progressive realisation of human rights.

2.5 Scotland, as part of the UK, is bound by the UN Convention against Torture (UNCAT).

3. PREVALENCE

3.1 We are currently considering data that might help us estimate the prevalence of FGM in Scotland.

3.2 According to the 2001 Census data, there were 2,946 women between the ages of 0 to 49 living in Scotland and born in one of the 29 countries in which FGM is reported to be a traditional practice.

3.3 The numbers from the 2011 Census (when available later this year) are likely to be significantly higher, as is demonstrated by the increase over time in numbers of births registered in Scotland to mothers who were born in one of these countries (from 120 births in 2001 to 656 births in 2011).

4. EVIDENCE OF FGM IN SCOTLAND

4.1 Last year the Police in Scotland investigated three reported incidents of FGM none of which led to prosecution.

4.2 There have been no further reported cases thus no resulting prosecutions or court convictions.

5. WHAT THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT IS DOING

5.1 In order to support the women who are affected and to counteract the continued practice of FGM, the Scottish Government uses a multi-agency approach involving relevant agencies, professionals and communities and a variety of interventions.

5.2 The Scottish Government has ensured that the work to tackle FGM has been given a clear focus by employing a full time officer dedicated to minority ethnic women's issues including FGM, who works with relevant agencies and organisations across Scotland.

5.3 The Government uses a number of methods to encourage the reporting of FGM including:

- (i) Engaging with individuals and groups of people from the communities affected by FGM;
- (ii) Raising awareness of the harm caused by FGM, along with awareness about the law and the Government's position;
- (iii) Working closely with police, voluntary organisations, health professionals, social services and education departments, to share good practice and promote awareness across Scotland for the prevention of FGM.

5.4 We have allocated £34.5m, for the period 2012–15, to tackle Violence Against Women, including FGM, in Scotland. This includes funding of £225,390 to Saheliya, a minority ethnic women's mental health organisation, to improve the lives of survivors of FGM through counselling, medical intervention and peer group support and to support and empower women and girls to resist FGM.

5.5 Scottish Government promotes collaborative working with minority ethnic women's organisations such as Saheliya, Dignity Alert Research Forum (DARF) and Shakti Women's Aid as well as voluntary and community groups and encourages links with relevant statutory bodies such as the police, health, social services and education to ensure that issues around FGM remain in focus.

5.6 We have supported key agencies and relevant Professional Bodies to publish guidelines for staff and offer relevant training to frontline staff.

5.7 Recognising the importance of public awareness and education in combatting FGM, we raise awareness through seminars, film screening and presentations to service providers and the general public, including:

- Seminars aimed at religious and community leaders about the role of leaders in combatting FGM; and
- Speaking at events about the impact of FGM on women, FGM law and the Scottish Government position.

5.8 FGM is addressed within the violence against women policy area and will be included in the Violence Against Women Strategy that is currently being developed.

The FGM strand of this strategy will focus on prevention through awareness raising, supporting victims, empowerment of women and girls, community engagement, multi-agency action and enforcement.

Interventions to address FGM will include:

- FGM related health problems continuing to be addressed by NHS doctors, nurses and midwives;
- A community based approach which involves champions and peer group support to empower women and girls to resist pressure and including working with men against FGM;
- Working with religious leaders through Interfaith Scotland to encourage them to condemn FGM and declare that it is not a religious requirement ;
- Continuing to raise awareness of legislation and supporting its implementation;
- Safeguarding of girls by creating a pathway through data and information sharing among service providers, professions and practitioners to track and safeguard girls at risk throughout the critical stages of their early life from birth to end of teenage years; and
- Ensuring standardised training and common practice principles among FGM stakeholders.

5.9 As FGM is often carried out on minors, it can also be a violation of the rights of children and therefore a child protection issue. *Child Protection Guidelines* which are used by all children related services such as education include a section on FGM. In addition, the *Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)* national approach requires practitioners across all services for children and adults to meet children's and young people's needs, working together where necessary to ensure they reach their full potential. The GIRFEC approach is incorporated into the working practices of all people working with children, young people and their families in Scotland.

5.10 FGM also violates a person's rights to health and the Scottish Government recognises that midwives, along with other health professionals such as doctors, nurses and health visitors can play a crucial role in eradicating FGM because women from practicing communities are likely to use health services during pregnancy or for other health reasons. Therefore they have an opportunity to identify girls at risk, record incidents and support women who have been mutilated. Currently in Scotland, if women are identified as being victims of FGM, the NHS in Scotland offers all available assistance to ensure positive health outcomes for the women affected.

6. POLICE SCOTLAND

6.1 Police Scotland, headed by Chief Constable Stephen House, formally came into existence on 1 April 2013. Police Scotland continues to uphold its public protection duty to all people including those at risk of FGM. It will incorporate examples of good practice from previous Forces and roll them out across Scotland. It is putting in place a strategic group that will take forward the work of the Honour Based Violence (HBV) Working Group previously under the Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS). The Scottish Government will continue to participate in this group.

6.2 Police Scotland has also produced an internal document 'Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation Standard Operating Procedures' which provides officers with the necessary understanding and skills to deal appropriately and consistently with HBV incidents.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 To date there have been no prosecutions or court convictions, with only three reported cases (see 3.2). The lack of cases does not mean that the Government is complacent and we continue to implement preventative measures to support the legislation. However, to ensure that FGM does not take place in Scotland at all, it is important that there is collaboration between all stakeholders at local and national levels as well continued liaison and collaboration with the UK Government. The Scottish Government will continue to explore and develop new ideas and strategies for preventing and combatting FGM.

8. FGM LINKS

Legislation:

Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005

Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) act 2005, explanatory notes

Guidance:

Gender Based Violence—Manager’s Guide (NHS Scotland)
NHS Scotland—National Gender Based Violence & Health Programme—Harmful Traditional Practices

FGM Fact sheets:

Scottish Government’s fact sheet on Female Genital Mutilation in English

Information:

FGM Scottish Government website

16 May 2013

Written evidence submitted by Justice for Iran

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In view of the request by the International Development Committee for submissions to the Select Committee’s announcement number 37 on violence against women and girls and furthermore the upcoming summit in June of this year being held in the UK, the human rights organisation, Justice for Iran would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention the plight of the female Iranian political and religious minority groups prisoners as victims of sexual violence by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

2. Justice for Iran (JFI) was established in July 2010 with the aim of addressing and eradicating the practice of impunity prevalent among Iranian officials and their use of systematic sexual abuse of women as a method of torture in order to extract confession. JFI uses methods such as documentation of human rights violators, collection of information, and research about authority figures who play a role in serious and widespread violations of human rights in Iran; as well as use of judicial, political and international mechanisms in place, to execute justice, remove impunity and bring about accountability to the actors and agents of human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

3. In May 2006, Zohreh Tabibzadeh Nouri, advisor to Iranian President Mahoud Ahmadinejad, was appointed head of the Iranian Centre for Women and Family Affairs. Upon taking this office, she declared her philosophy, saying: “I do not deny that there are gaps in the Iranian law when it comes to protection of women’s rights... however, as long as I live and remain in charge of this centre, I will not let anyone sign international charters, including CEDAW, since we can fix the gaps and existing problems through the Islamic Faith. I see no reason to follow the unsuccessful western model.”

4. This speaks volumes about the stance that the Islamic Republic of Iran chooses to take in relation to the rights of women and girls in custody and generally, by outright denial of their voice and fleeing responsibility on an international level as it fears the findings will cause further international outcry as to the lack of responsibility it wishes to take to accept the crimes of sexual violence reported and the punishment it will be pressurised to carry out against the perpetrators within its own officials and government agencies whilst re-asserting Shari’a law as the basis of their claim that international law does not comply nor compare with its credence.

5. Based on JFI’s findings, some of the various forms of sexual torture, such as the rape of virgin girls prior to their execution, were conducted in a systematic way and were based on the interpretation of an order by Ayatollah Khomeini (1979–1989), the Islamic Republic Supreme Leader at the time (quoted by Ayatollah Montazeri, his deputy of the time). In addition, various verses from the Koran and shari’a based fatwas were used to claim that women who were captured in battle with the kuffar (infidels) were akin to property and slaves of the army of Islam (a practice of the Middle Ages which had subsequently been accepted, at least theologically, as a part of Islamic war practices). That is to say the prison and judicial authorities were treated as the victorious army and female political prisoners as their slaves, not as citizens with different political perspectives. These theological sources provided religious “justification” for raping imprisoned women.

6. As JFI further asserts in the following paragraphs the repugnant crimes committed in Iranian prisons against women and girls, it is strongly suggested that given the strength of UK leadership role internationally on VAWG, including the effectiveness of DFID’s work with multilateral partners and the UK’s international Champion for VAWG position and the cross-governmental working within the UK, particularly co-operation between DFID, the FCO and the MOD on the Preventing Sexual violence Initiative and the UK Government National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security, that these findings by the brave testimonies offered are presented by The International Development Committee with the view that the Select Committee will give voice to the voiceless women and girls victims of sexual violence in Iran and bring to justice the perpetrators of these vile acts.

7. The heinous crimes of sexual violence against female prisoners in Iran since the formation of the Islamic Republic as the ruling government have gone unnoticed with these crimes dating back to early 1980s and escalating dramatically in volume. These crimes have been committed and continue without any system of complaint or any judicial avenues of justice being offered to the victims. It is only a minority of the victims

of these crimes who have been able to give crucial evidence of the ordeals that they had been subjected to by the authorities either in the process of interrogation or being forced to confess to crimes that they were accused of (albeit with no evidence) or for being active protestors speaking against the government and its' policies.

8. It was in this context that we saw the need for in-depth research that would shed light on some of these questions and by examining how and where these sexual abuses occurred and the extent to which they were a systematic. Many of the political analysts have assumed that sexual abuse and usually harsh treatment of women political prisoners had been, a deliberate and systematic action by the Iranian regime aimed at discouraging women from public participation in politics. However, lack of a systemic study had prevented a systematic discussion of the topics. It was in this context that we decided to launch the project "Crimes without Punishment" in order to shed light on these matters.

9. It is with great hope that this report has been prepared for your attention and given the very imminent presidential elections in Iran and the guaranteed rise in protests and further arrests of protestors, that these violations being perpetrated against the women and girls prisoners are presented to the Select Committee with the weight that they deserve.

THE REPORT

10. When the results of the 2009 presidential election were announced, hundreds of thousands of Iranians stormed the streets of Tehran and other large cities to protest what they believed to be an incredible act of election rigging. Although the protestors' initial demand was that the election results be annulled and the votes recounted, in the following days and months slogans had evolved to express lack of trust in the state to the point that the initial vague slogan of "Death to Dictator" was replaced with "Death to Khamenei" (Iran's Supreme Leader) and in some cases even "Death to the Islamic Republic." According to the Judiciary Spokesman, during the first month following the election, four thousand (4,000) people were arrested in Tehran alone. Widespread arrests of civil activists and regular people who were protesting the election results continued well into the following months. Those released told harrowing tales of the treatment of detained individuals, including the rape of males and females by prison officials.

11. Mehdi Karroubi, one of the two contesting presidential candidates (a religious leader in his own right, who was also among Ayatollah Khomeini's trustees), established a committee to follow up on the conditions of the detainees arrested in the post-election unrest. The testimonies received by the committee revealed that one of the methods of torture used on postelection detainees was rape and sexual harassment. On 29 July 2009, in a letter to Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani, then the Head of the Expediency Discernment Council, one of the highest centres of state authority, Karroubi wrote, "A group of those detained have expressed that some of the detained girls were raped so violently that it caused tearing and injury in their sexual organ. He publically demanded investigation to this matter.

12. This was the first time that the topic of rape in prisons was discussed openly and widely by an individual member of the governing body of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Although, years prior to this event, Ayatollah Montazeri, who was the deputy leader of Iran during 1985–1989, had included a letter that he had written in a letter to Ayatollah Khomeini in his memoir which was published in 2000. In this letter he writes : Do you know that a large number of people have died under torture by interrogators? Do you know that in Mashhad prison, due to a lack of medical care and attention for young girls, they were forced to excise the ovaries and uterus of around 25 of those young girls and in that manner, deformed (naaqes) their bodies and reproductive organs?!... Do you know that they [sexually] took young girls by force in some of the prisons of the Islamic Republic? Do you know that when young women are interrogated, usage of vulgar and sexual (namoosi) related terminology is commonplace? The letter was published in Ayatollah Montazeri's memoir in 2000, after he was removed from power and placed under house arrest. As a result, it had limited reach within wider society. Yet after Karroubi's letter to Rafsanjani was published, and brave victims went public with their testimonies of rape and sexual abuse during the post-election arrests, the topic of rape in prisons pervaded the public discourse in Iranian society more widely. Some protestors in subsequent oppositional protest rallies in Tehran chanted slogans such as: "Canons, tanks and rape are no longer effective" or "Rape in prison, is this in the Koran too?" Such slogans were also chanted in the religious city of Qom, and during the burial procession of Ayatollah Montazeri, who died in 2009.

13. The belief that rape was administered as an organized crime against political prisoners in Iran, particularly since the rise of Islamists to power, was strengthened by an increasing number of victims' public testimonies. Especially with the recognition, in public discourse, of rape as a form of torture in prisons, many more victims who had been raped while in custody during the 1980s and 90s began to speak out. Videos of their testimonies were widely disseminated on the internet. Available published prison memoirs and testimonies also gained greater attention and were reprinted and distributed on a wider scale.

14. One of the most significant topics was the systematic rape of virgin girls before execution as an organized form of sexual torture, particularly during the 1980s. The Islamic Republic officials' reaction to such claims, testimonies, and news has been complete and unequivocal denial and rejection. Based on our findings, some of the various forms of sexual torture, such as the rape of virgin girls prior to their execution, were conducted in a systematic way and were based on the interpretation of an order by Ayatollah Khomeini (1979–1989), the Islamic Republic Supreme Leader at the time.

15. Indeed since the 1980s, in a few occasions when such reports or testimonies would surface, the Islamic regime would rush to deny the existence of sexual torture in prisons as baseless accusations that were part of attempts by its enemies, particularly western powers, to delegitimize the regime. Hence while the victims could bear witness to what happened to them while in custody, they had no documentation to respond to questions such as the scale of usage of rape and sexual harassment as an organized or widespread means of torture against political prisoners. Nor did the victims have documentation of the methods and forms of implementation, or the identity of actors and perpetrators of such torture.

16. In defining torture, we used the definition adopted from Article 1 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.¹ Based on this definition, torture is: Any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person, information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

17. Throughout the 1980s in Iran, thousands of individuals were arrested and detained for supposedly supporting or participating in oppositional political organizations that were critical of the Islamic Republic regime's undemocratic practices. So far, many reputable reports have been published detailing the various torture methods inflicted upon the political prisoners in that decade. However, despite anecdotal evidence on sexual abuses in the prisons of Iran, the topic has not yet been subject to systematic study. Indeed the issue of rape in prisons has been known throughout Iran, but never discussed seriously in public due to extreme cultural taboos on the topic. This taboo and prevalent perceptions of shame and (dis)honor in Iran has meant that open discussion of rape or torture is perceived to negatively impact not just the victims, but also their wider family and associates. As such, the state escapes responsibility and accountability for not only letting these atrocities happen, but for its role in actively promoting sexual torture as a tool for political control. We feel that unless these systematic occurrences of rape atrocities against female political prisoners are documented and presented to the public, nationally and internationally, the culture of sexual violence against women by the state will continue, and worse, encourage others to commit the same crimes without fear of punishment.

18. This reports made available by JFI aim to uncover the degree to which sexual torture of political prisoners in the 1980s was widespread and systematic. The report is the result of an analysis of publically published records, as well as interviews with 77 political prisoners detained during the 1980s and 18 informed individuals whom either because of the position they held or family connection held detailed information relevant to the research. Furthermore, the report delves into how sexual torture against female prisoners was carried out, in what manner it was justified, and the goal the officials hoped to accomplish through inflicting the torture. There are testimonials which we would be more than happy to include already exhibited in our extensive report which we are unable to include in this summary due to the limitations set out for its' length but will happily forward at any time your Committee wishes to further examine.

20 May 2013
