

CEDAW chairperson's statement on strengthening international legal frameworks on violence against women

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) supports efforts to effectively strengthen the international framework to combat violence against women.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the application of which CEDAW monitors, comprehensively covers all forms of discrimination against women, including gender-based violence, as defined in CEDAW's General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women. Combatting violence against women is a cross-cutting theme in CEDAW's concluding observations and in its case-law under the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

A number of options exist for strengthening the international framework to combat violence against women. In CEDAW's view, any initiative must:

- be grounded in existing norms and standards, and not undermine or fragment existing mechanisms;
- avoid further proliferation of mandates and focus on the efficient implementation of existing human rights obligations, including those contained in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women which has been ratified by 187 of the 193 Member States of the United Nations; and
- be feasible in the current context of a drive for greater efficiency and streamlining in the operation of UN bodies, proposals for strengthening the entire UN treaty body system, and significant financial constraints.

On this basis, CEDAW is of the view that the option of a new, stand-alone legally binding instrument on violence against women would not be an effective means of strengthening international legal protections for women and girls.

The Committee looks forward to discussing in detail creative options for strengthening protection of women from violence with all stakeholders, and particularly with the other relevant independent international human rights mechanisms.
