**Report of the Platform of independent international and regional mechanisms on violence against women and women’s rights**

**63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

**NY, 13 March 2018**

**Participants:** Dubravka Šimonović (Chair)*,* the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences; Bandana Rana and Lia Nadaraia, CEDAW members; Sylvia Mesa Peluffo, President of MESECVI and Luz Mejia, Technical Secretary of MESECVI; Margarette May Macaulay, the Rapporteurship on women’s rights of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; Ivana Radačić*,* Elizabeth Broderick and Melissa Upreti*,* members of United Nations Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice; Feride Acar, President of GREVIO, Liri Kopaçi-Di Michele, Executive Secretary of GREVIO and Claudia Luciani, Director of Democratic Governance and Anti-Discrimination, Council of Europe, Federica Donati and Roberta Serrentino (OHCHR)

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (SRVAW) opened the meeting by stressing the importance to institutionalize the platform and make it more sustainable for the future. She encouraged all independent violence against women and women’s human rights mechanisms of the platform to speak more openly about the platform to give it more visibility in and outside the UN system. The SRVAW said that she has been advocating for support for this platform in several ways, including during the presentation of her oral report at the opening of CSW63.

All participants agreed that an effective way to institutionalize the platform is to have it included in a General Assembly resolution. This will not be unprecedented, since it was done by a GA resolution (A/RES/67/152) on children that has provided for regular budget for all the activities under the leadership of the SRSG on violence against children. The SRVAW sought a meeting with the President of the General Assembly to discuss about the future of the platform and advocate for a possible GA Resolution and encouraged all members to advocate through regional groups for the institutionalization of the platform. Follow up to this will be on agenda of the Platform closed meeting in Strasbourg. Participants suggested sending a joint letter addressed to the UN SG and the President of the General Assembly to ask for support of the platform. The SRVAW reiterated that it is of paramount importance to show that these mechanisms are acknowledged, as she believes that the platform is not sufficiently known and promoted.

At his statement at the CSW63, the Secretary-General talked about the “pushbacks” on women’s rights and launched the slogan “push back the pushbacks and keep pushing back”. The platform adopted a joint statement on pushbacks which should be used to promote the institutionalization of the platform on women’s human rights mechanisms:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24380&LangID=E>

The next CSW64 will focus on the review of the Beijing +25. The SRVAW recalled that at the time of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) in 1995, many mechanisms did not exist, while others were recently established. In this regard, the SRVAW is preparing her report to the Human Rights Council in June 2019 on the 25 years of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women as contribution to the BPA + 25. She would like to include in her report few paragraphs on developments from each mechanism of the platform and how each mechanism has integrated the BPA. She invited them to send these paragraphs in the next 10 days.

She also encouraged each mechanism to review the relevance of their work in the implementation of the BPA that could be included in a platform’s publication on the BPA + 25 and presented at the next CSW64 highlighting what each mechanism has been doing since 1995, identifying the remaining challenges and developing new strategies. This publication would also make the platform more visible, since there is a feeling that the mechanisms are not sufficiently supported and recognized at the CSW and elsewhere. This will be further discussed in Strasbourg.

All participants felt strongly that a counter action is needed to stop pushbacks on women’s rights and agreed that the platform has an important role to play on this. The SRVAW and GREVIO encouraged all members of the platform to make specific appeals and lobby with friendly, like-minded States, including States that are supportive of the CEDAW, so that they can help minimizing the impact of these anti-women rights movements.

The MESECVI suggested to find an official name for the platform which will make it more easily identifiable in all different regions. Proposed names:

* Platform of independent mechanisms on violence against women and women’s rights (considered too long by all)
* Women’s human rights platform (WHRP)
* Women’s human rights independent mechanism platform (WHRMP)

No agreement on a name was reached and it will be discussed again in Strasbourg.

SRVAW mentioned that [Special Rapporteur on Rights of Women in Africa](http://www.achpr.org/mechanisms/rights-of-women/) has been promoting universal ratification of the Maputo Protocol in Africa in next 2 years and she affirmed that all instruments should be equally implemented. The Beijing +25 should serve to make sure that discrimination and violence against women are integrated in the whole review process.

On the strategies to disseminate the report of the SRVAW on violence against women in politics, it was mentioned that each mechanism should play a role in its dissemination. The SRVAW affirmed that the Council of Europe’s initiative #NotInMyParliament was a good way to integrate her report in the work of parliamentarians, but she stressed that the report and its recommendations should be transmitted to all parliaments.

The Secretariat of MESECVI informed that in the Latin-American region there are two organizations of women parliamentarians which have been raising awareness about the model law and that these organizations can disseminate the SRVAW report.

Two vice chairs of the CEDAW Committee mentioned that the Committee is re-structuring. There are now six internal standing working groups: one on communication, one inquiries, one on working methods, one on SDG, one on the NHRI and one on GR on **trafficking of women and girls in the context of global migration** and two focal points on regional mechanisms and treaty body coordination. There is a framework of cooperation between the CEDAW and SRVAW and standing focal point on General Recommendation 35 should be appointed, as agreed when the SRVAW attended the CEDAW consultations on GR35.

The President of MESECVI informed that this year they are celebrating its 25th anniversary. The MESECVI is now at the 3rd round of evaluation focused on stereotypes and violence against women, the questionnaires have been submitted to the countries and a report will follow. This year the MESECVI is also releasing the two first General Recommendations on the Belém do Pará, respectively on legitimate defense of women who kill their partners and on missing women and girls.

The SRVAW informed that States are now more willing to send data on femicide. The data will serve to highlight what is not working well in a country and shed light on how and where States are making mistakes in the eradication of femicide. A remaining challenge is that many states are collecting data differently, for instance in certain countries maternity mortality is considered as femicide, so she stressed that is essential to set up clear categories for data collection

The President of GREVIO informed that the ratification of the Istanbul Convention is going well, there are 34 states parties to the Istanbul Convention out of the 47 members of the Council of Europe; the last country to ratify was Ireland. 11 State parties have signed but not ratified. 8 country reports have been published so far and upcoming evaluation visits will take place in Italy, Netherlands and Serbia. On 1st of April, there will be the election of 10 new members of GREVIO whose mandate expires on 31 May 2019 (including the current President of GREVIO) while 5 current members continue until the end of their mandate in 2022. Although GREVIO doesn’t have General recommendations like CEDAW, it is introducing thematic discussions to develop a more substantive interpretation of the Istanbul Convention.

The Secretariat of GREVIO expressed further concerns on the backlash against women’s rights and the Istanbul Convention and stressed the need for concerted and coordinated approach from all the mechanisms to counter backlash and called for vigilance to ensure that the backlash does not penetrate the mechanisms themselves and their independent work.

Members of the United Nations Working Group on Discrimination against Women (WGDAW) re-affirmed their commitment to work together and informed the platform that they are working on many issues relating to discrimination against women. Their next thematic report will focus on deprivation of liberty. They have produced position papers and are looking to produce new papers on gender, sex work, surrogacy and male accountability. The SRVAW said to the WGDAW that her mandate is also interested in working on surrogacy. The WGDAW has submitted amicus briefs on cases in Ireland and England and they are working on one for South Korea. There is an ongoing dialogue with CEDAW to enhance collaboration. They affirmed that starting from this year, one of the 3 sessions of the Working Group will take place in a region closer to the regional mechanisms and in October 2019 the session  is expected to take place in Addis Ababa.

TheRapporteur on the Rights of Women of the IACHR declared that this year will be the 60th anniversary of the Commission. The IACHR will keep pushing forward the ratification of the Inter-American convention on human rights, despite the actions of regressive anti-women rights movements, especially faith-based movements, which aim to restrict women’s sexual and reproductive rights. In this regard, the SRVAW recalled that she is a drafting a thematic report on mistreatment and violence against women during pregnancy and child birth and ask the mechanisms to submit inputs.

The Secretariat of GREVIO updated the mechanisms on the preparation for the meeting of the platform and the thematic conference in Strasbourg. There will be good participation from the intergovernmental side: invitations to the conference will be extended to both members of the Gender Equality Commission (the intergovernmental body in charge of gender equality issues) and members of the committee of parties to the Istanbul Convention. On the programme, at the opening there will be a political part organized under the auspices of the French presidency. After the political opening, there will be time to make the case for the platform and plead with governments to support the work of the platform. The thematic session will focus on custody and violence against women, with GREVIO and SRVAW addressing the concluding remarks. On custody issues, Professor Kaddari was identified as an expert and she will give an overview with regards to children’s rights in custody, case courts and possible recommendations. The Rapporteur on the Rights of Women of the IACHR will also be in the panel as former judge of the Inter-American Court on Human Rights. There were discussions to modify the title of the first thematic session but all members agreed on keeping the title as it is: “Putting victims’ safety first: Child custody and domestic violence in national and international jurisprudence”**.** There is still no confirmation of the participation of an expert representing the Asia region.

**Action points:**

1. Joint statement by the platform on pushbacks;
2. Preparation of a short publication for B+25 review on the achievements and impact of the mechanisms;
3. Each mechanism to send 2 paragraphs on their contribution to Beijing + 25 to be included in the SRVAW’s report on 25 years of mandate by **3 April;**
4. Send a joint letter to President of the General Assembly, SG and DSG, the Executive Director of UNWOMEN, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to the heads of the OAS, AU and CoE to seek support for the institutionalization of the platform and for holding regular meetings at the CSW.
5. Discuss about possibilities to do a joint celebration for the mechanisms which are having their anniversaries this year.

 