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**REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON GENDER STATISTICS AND
INDICATORS FOR MEASURING THE INCIDENCE OF AND TRENDS IN VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

La Paz, Bolivia, 21-23 November 2001

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date of the meeting

1. The International Meeting on Gender Statistics and Indicators for Measuring the Incidence of and Trends in Violence against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean met from 21 to 23 November 2001 in La Paz, Bolivia.

2. Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by statisticians and specialists in gender studies on violence against women. The participants included specialists from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Spain, Sweden and Venezuela. Also attending were specialists from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States (IACW/OAS), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).¹

3. Organization of work

3. The work of the meeting was organized as follows:

1. Opening meeting
2. Panel 1: Conceptual aspects of violence against women
3. Panel 2: Gender indicators. Approaches and strategies
4. Panel 3: National experiences
5. Presentation of working paper entitled *Violencia contra la mujer en América Latina y el Caribe: una propuesta para medir su magnitud y evolución*
6. Working groups:
 - Group 1: "Surveys"
 - Group 2: "Administrative records"

¹ See list of participants in annex 1.

7. Plenary meeting: Reports of working groups. Presentation of findings and recommendations by the Rapporteurs.
8. Closing meeting

4. Documentation

4. A number of documents on the subjects discussed were distributed;² these may be found on the link to the Women and Development Unit on the ECLAC Web page, at <http://www.eclac.cl/mujer>. It was decided that the Bolivian National Institute of Statistics and ECLAC should prepare, over the medium term, an extensive publication containing the full texts of all the papers presented.

B. DISCUSSIONS

1. Opening meeting

5. The meeting was opened by Carlos Garafulic, Director of the National Institute of Statistics of Bolivia; Enrique Ordaz, Director of the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC; Sonia Montaña, Chief of the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC; José Antonio Pages, Representative of WHO/PAHO in Bolivia; and Mary Carmen Arias, Under-Secretary of Gender Issues, Generational Affairs and Family of Bolivia.

6. The speakers expressed their appreciation to the National Institute of Statistics of Bolivia, for responding to the requests made at the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, both of which had decided to work on the issue of gender statistics. Under the leadership of Bolivia, the countries represented at the meeting would contribute to the process of gathering, analysing and disseminating gender statistics, joining efforts with regional and inter-American agencies such as UNIFEM, PAHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and FLACSO. ECLAC would serve as the technical secretariat and the centre for harmonizing regional efforts in this field.

2. Panel 1: Conceptual aspects of violence against women

7. Panel 1 was made up of Sylvia Loli, from the Human Rights Programme of the “Flora Tristán” Women’s Centre (Peru), who discussed international standards and guidelines that are applicable to studies on the issue of domestic violence; Gladys Acosta, Regional Advisor on Women and Gender Equity of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), who spoke on legal concepts relating to gender violence; and Denise Hirao, of the Latin American Committee in Defence of Women’s Rights (CLADEM), who reviewed the development of the concept of violence in international instruments on human rights and women’s rights and discussed the economic implications of violence against women.

² See list of documents in annex 2.

3. Panel 2: Gender indicators. Approaches and strategies

8. The second panel discussed the experience of a number of institutions in the production of gender statistics. The panel members were Walter Castillo Guerra, Deputy Director of the National Institute of Statistics of Bolivia, who described the national system of statistical data; Birgitta Hedman, a Swedish specialist in gender statistics, who spoke on aspects that need to be taken into account in producing gender statistics; Guadalupe Espinosa, Regional Director of UNIFEM in Mexico, who discussed the role of dialogue between producers and users of statistics in the strategy of her organization; and Alberto Concha-Eastman, Regional Advisor on Health and Violence for the WHO/PAHO Programme on Non-Communicable Diseases, who presented that agency's Second Regional Plan of Action on Prevention of Violence, 2001-2005.

4. Panel 3: National experiences

9. Panel 3 included Soledad Larraín, consultant from the University of Chile, who spoke on the 2001 survey on detection and analysis of the prevalence of domestic violence in the Santiago Metropolitan Region; Marcela Eternod, Director of Population Studies of the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information (INEGI) of Mexico, who discussed the findings of the 1999 survey on domestic violence as a source of information for constructing indicators to be used in policymaking; Kelly Cristiane da Silva, of the University of Brasilia, who discussed methodological aspects of the national research study on the operations, in 1999, of the *comisariías* that provide services to women in Brazil; Renato Sergio de Lima, analyst from the SEADE Foundation, who presented the data for 1999 recorded by the *comisariías*; and Mrs. Roberta Clarke, Social Affairs Officer of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, who presented the conclusions of a 2001 study on systems for gathering data on domestic violence in the Caribbean.

10. During the debate that preceded the group work and the presentation of the ECLAC working paper, reports on the experiences of different countries were presented, and the participants asked questions on methodologies applied in the studies, particularly with regard to sampling, selection of interviewers for the surveys, reference periods and the conceptual framework for the questionnaires. In particular, there was concern that the protocols chosen should include a gender perspective and be designed to identify the power relations involved in gender violence, instead of merely covering specific aspects such as psychological and health issues. The participants agreed on the importance of paying attention to the content and wording of questions and noted that much remained to be done in order to detect hidden violence in situations where privacy was an issue or identify cases of deliberate and persistent violence. Participants also felt that in order to resolve these difficulties, producers and users of statistics needed to communicate regarding the methodology to be applied in producing the data.

11. Despite the multidimensional nature of the problem, participants recognized that a minimum set of comparable indicators of the main characteristics of violence against women could and should be gathered on a regular basis. The participants stressed the catalytic role of ECLAC in identifying such basic indicators and collecting pertinent proposals at the regional level.

5. Introduction of the working paper and beginning of group work

12. To provide background for the work of the groups, the Chief of the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC, the Director of the ECLAC Division of Statistics and Economic Projections and the consultant of the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC introduced the working paper entitled *Violencia contra la mujer en América Latina y el Caribe: una propuesta para medir su magnitud y evolución*.

13. The participants then split into two groups to conduct an in-depth analysis of indicators obtained from surveys and administrative records. Following the presentation of reports on experience gained with the use of different types of tools, the working sessions began.

14. The group on Surveys first heard presentations by María Isabel Plata, who reported on the experience of Profamilia in Colombia; Jorge María Gracia Fernández, of the National Statistical Office of Spain; Zoraida Castro, who spoke on the Population and Family Health Survey conducted in 2000 in Peru; and Loreto Biehl, consultant from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), who presented a regional report on the subject.

15. The participants then divided into two sub-groups to (a) identify the most important questions, based on gender indicators, that needed to be asked in order to find ways to raise public awareness, contribute to the formulation of national plans, monitor policies to combat violence and ensure accountability; (b) discuss the advantages and difficulties of conducting special surveys versus including questions on violence as part of a regular survey; and (c) identify strengths and weaknesses of producers and users of information and possible ways for the two to collaborate in gathering data.

16. In the second group, on administrative records, Dora Caballero and Alberto Amaris, of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), discussed the situation of administrative records in Bolivia and Panama; Lily Jara, consultant from UNIFEM, reviewed the characteristics of the Ecuadoran system for gathering statistics on violence; Rosalyn Hazelle, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Development, Community and Gender Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, presented her assessment of the information situation in her country; and Beatriz Lovesio described the strategies developed by IACW/OAS to create an information system using comparative indicators in the Southern Cone countries.

17. The participants of this group also divided into two sub-groups, to (a) identify the main challenges involved in efforts to improve administrative records on violence against women, taking into account the main actors and their sectoral and general needs, and (b) identify the strengths and weaknesses of administrative records as a source of information for constructing indicators.

C. PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

18. Once the group work sessions had concluded, a plenary meeting was held to present the findings and recommendations of the sub-groups.

1. General recommendations

19. The participants agreed that the indicators proposed by ECLAC in the working paper entitled *Violencia contra la mujer en América Latina y el Caribe: una propuesta para medir su magnitud y evolución* provided a suitable methodological base for undertaking a systematic measurement effort in the region and promoting data-gathering strategies in the countries. In particular, it was stressed that even though the data-gathering effort needed to be extended beyond the issue of spousal abuse, the fact that the ECLAC proposal used violence against women as a starting point for the measurement efforts made it possible to identify the main obstacles encountered in data gathering at the national level. It also provided an indication of the complexity of the problem with a minimum set of valid indicators which could be estimated on a regular basis and took into account the actual capacity of national agencies responsible for producing statistics.

20. A number of recommendations relating to both policies and techniques were adopted. These recommendations are directed at the national statistical institutes, national women's offices, services for women victims of violence, women's organizations and international cooperation agencies. The following recommendations were drawn up:

(a) National statistical institutes should:

- Allocate sufficient resources to address the magnitude of the problem of violence against women;
- Carry out and strengthen multidisciplinary efforts throughout the process, from data collection to analysis and dissemination;
- Provide training in analysis and methodologies so as to enable the staff to work on gender analysis and violence against women;
- Improve coordination and linkages between producers and users of information, i.e., political institutions and social organizations working on the issue of violence against women;
- Improve the effectiveness of data and the timeliness of dissemination to all social sectors and generate statistical products for specific types of users.

(b) National women's offices should:

- Work to develop the political will needed to establish a national system of information on violence against women;

- Set up working groups to define a comprehensive picture of violence against women, as a basis for determining the content of training programmes for personnel of victim services and identifying the variables to be included in a standard nationwide records system. Membership of the working groups should include not only the national women's office, but also the national statistical institute, agencies working on the problem of violence and focal points set up in the national legislation upon ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women and the Convention of Belém do Pará;
- Strengthen their technical capacity in the area of statistical analysis;
- Promote academic research in order to allow for a better understanding of the phenomenon of violence against women, with a view to improving the quality of statistics and indicators produced by the statistical institutes;
- Coordinate their own information efforts with those of the national statistical institutes, in order to ensure that statistics and indicators on violence against women are produced on a regular basis and that they are reliable, sustainable and based on official sources;
- Use available information in drawing up plans and programmes;
- Foster closer relations with civil society and organizations specializing in prevention and treatment of violence against women;
- Disseminate existing information throughout the Government, the branches of the State and society as a whole.

(c) Women's organizations should:

- Develop capacities for requesting information on violence against women from national statistical institutes and using the available information in a suitable manner;
- Conduct follow-up and monitoring actions and exercise citizen controls so as to ensure that public agencies working on the issue of violence against women are held accountable.

(d) International cooperation agencies should:

- Improve inter-institutional coordination in order to avoid duplicating efforts and issuing contradictory information, and make better use of scarce resources;
- Provide technical assistance to national agencies;
- Facilitate the exchange of experiences in order to promote horizontal cooperation;
- Promote the dissemination of information through the use of simple and user-friendly formats geared toward different users, and facilitate Internet access;
- Ensure continuity of and follow up on programmes they promote.

2. Surveys

21. In considering recommendations and conclusions on the matter of surveys, the participants identified a number of questions that might be included with a view to constructing gender indicators that could be used in raising public awareness, formulating national plans, monitoring policies for combating violence and ensuring accountability. It was felt that in order to measure the magnitude of gender violence, a universe of women aged 15 and over should be used, and data should be collected on the following variables:

- The period during which the events occurred: during the last 12 months/earlier;
- Frequency of abuse: frequently, sometimes, never;
- Places where abuse was perpetrated;
- Classification of abuse by types of violence: physical, sexual or psychological.

22. With regard to the latter point, the experts noted that the classification of types of violence should include violence of an economic nature, e.g., not providing economic resources or refusing to allow a woman decision-making power in connection with the budget; and the refusal to allow a woman to exercise individual freedom, e.g., not letting her work or forbidding her to wear certain types of clothes. The experts also stressed the importance of producers and users reviewing and reaching consensus on the classification of abuse in each type of violence in order to ensure that the results of surveys conducted in the different countries are all comparable to each other.

23. In order to ensure a suitable description of the phenomenon, the working group suggested that the following variables should be considered for both abused women and abusers.

(a) Characteristics of abused women:

- Age;
- Activity status: economic participation, occupational category;
- Percentage contribution to family income;
- Educational level;
- Racial or ethnic group;
- Area of residence;
- Participation in social organizations;
- Experience with violence in childhood;
- Experience with domestic violence of parents;
- Poverty status;
- Pregnancy status;
- Duration of spousal relationship;
- Ownership of dwelling or responsibility for rental contract;
- Family structure of the household.

(b) Characteristics of abusers:

- Relationship with the abused woman;
- Age;
- Employment status;

- Level of schooling;
- Use of drugs or alcohol.

24. With regard to the nature of the violence itself, the goal was to obtain further information about the circumstances that trigger violence and the interrelationship with other violent situations outside the home or with other members of the household. It was suggested that special surveys on the issue might investigate the following:

- Impact of violence on the physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health of victims;
- Impact on their social and employment status and their economic situation;
- How women react to abuse;
- Perception of the motives that led to violence;
- Where violence was not reported, how abused women perceive their reasons for accepting the situation;
- Background of violence with other members of the household;
- Background of violence outside the household.

25. The experts also suggested questions for identifying the institutions that provided care and whether victims were satisfied with the care received. In all cases, questions should be included to determine how much victims know about the legislative resources and the systems and institutions that are available to help them.

26. In considering the advantages and disadvantages of conducting special surveys on the issue or including specific modules in regular surveys, the working group considered that the two types of research fulfilled different objectives and that both types of surveys should be conducted. Regular surveys revealed the magnitude of the problem and made it possible to follow up on it, while special surveys provided an opportunity for in-depth research on the characteristics, causes and consequences of spousal abuse, in addition to facilitating an evaluation of progress made in disseminating information on protection and care systems.

27. With regard to the production of data by means of surveys, the participants pointed out the strengths of national statistical institutes in designing surveys and using sampling frameworks, the existence of a permanent budget to ensure that information could be produced on a regular basis, their technical capacity to compile and analyse data, their potential ability to produce comparable data and harmonize sources between countries, the social and political credibility of the information issued and their capacity for disseminating the results.

28. Nevertheless, the participants also identified a number of weaknesses in dealing with the issue of violence against women, in particular, the lack of technical and conceptual know-how and the lack of experience with surveys on matters considered to be private. To this must be added the lack of sensitivity on the part of decision makers and technicians regarding this issue, the lack of intersectoral and inter-institutional coordination, and the fact that users do not participate in planning the design and implementation of surveys.

29. These same users—including governmental women’s bureaux, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations— had more experience in dealing with the issue of violence against women, as well as a conceptual framework that enabled them to make use of the information. Among their other strengths, the women’s offices were able to establish and maintain inter-institutional relations, disseminate information in their advocacy efforts and facilitate citizen surveillance. The main weaknesses of these offices and of civil society organizations in general was their lack of knowledge about the statistical data that are available, their lack of analytical capacity to interpret the findings of surveys and the lack of budgetary resources, which often jeopardized their own sustainability.

30. In addition to the general recommendations for national statistical institutes, the national women’s offices, women’s organizations and international cooperation agencies, the working group on surveys made the following recommendations to ECLAC in connection with the construction of gender indicators for measuring violence:

- Prepare a list of questions that might be included in surveys and send it to the national statistical institutes, stressing the importance of the questions in generating indicators;
- Encourage producers of data to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches, both in analysing data and in conducting research;
- Construct indicators on processes and relationships in such a way as to take into account gender relations in the production of data.

3. Administrative records

31. In considering this issue, the working group identified the potentialities of administrative records for improving public policies against violence. The participants began by noting the fact that administrative records constituted official sources of information that were produced on a continuous and systematic basis. They also reflected the actual demand for services to women and the actual number of complaints brought, thus making it possible to assess needs and project the amount of resources required to meet those needs. They also noted that records had “captive informants” and that if questions were drafted in an intelligent and sensitive manner, they could elicit a large amount of useful information with which to generate causal and explanatory indicators for combating violence against women. The data that could be extracted from records made it possible to identify different types of violence against women, work to promote the political will needed to improve record-keeping by assistance services, and request additional budgets when necessary, as well as bring certain issues to the fore on the public agenda. Records could be modified or improved as a result of decisions taken in response to this willingness to improve the gathering of data on violence.

32. Nevertheless, these strengths would be undermined by a number of problems faced by institutions because of the poor quality of information recorded on incomplete forms, the appropriation of records by the institutions concerned and the failure to share data with different sectors of users. To address these problems, the experts drew up a list of challenges for improving administration records on violence, as follows:

(a) National statistical institutes should:

- Assume responsibility for standardizing, concentrating and disseminating, in a regular and timely fashion, the information gleaned from administrative records on violence against women, taking into account the diversity of users and the specific circumstances of each country;
- Propose changes in the forms currently used by services with a view to identifying what information should be gathered by all services, to ensure that standard concepts and definitions are used and that certain variables are included so as to allow for a suitable data to be compiled on victims and abusers, as well as on the context in which acts of violence occur;
- Develop an ongoing training programme for professional staff dealing with gender issues and violence against women, in order to enable them to design needed changes in records and generate a set of basic indicators;
- Work to integrate information on services provided to women victims of violence by NGOs, churches and other civil society organizations.

(b) Victim services should:

- Promote mechanisms for coordinating data collection with users, so as to take advantage of their contributions in identifying variables that need to be standardized, as well as in constructing indicators and disseminating information;
- Share information, in a flexible and continuous manner, with national statistical institutes and with each other when necessary;
- Work jointly with national women's offices to promote ongoing training for officials who are responsible for filling out administrative records and gathering information in the different victim services.

(c) National women's offices should:

- Take the necessary steps to identify and establish uniform criteria for the variables to be requested from different services;
- Ensure that training on violence against women is included in the curriculum for professional and technical staff of different victim services, including police, courts and health services.

(d) Women's organizations should:

- Coordinate their work with that of national statistical institutes and national women's offices and foster a climate of inter-institutional collaboration in order to ensure that all organizations of civil society use a standard form for records.

(e) International cooperation agencies should:

- As a matter of priority, assign financial and technological resources for institutions that generate administrative records on violence against women;
- Provide technical assistance for training personnel of institutions concerned with the recording of data on violence against women, including national statistical institutes, national women's offices, the health sector, police and the courts.

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United Nations bodies**

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Programa Común de las Naciones Unidas sobre el VIH/SIDA/Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

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**C. Organismos especializados
Specialized agencies**

Organización Mundial de la Salud-Organización Panamericana de la Salud (OMS-OPS)/World Health Organization-Pan American Health Organization (WHO-PAHO)

- José Alberto Pages, Representative, OPS Bolivia
- Alberto Concha-Eastman, Regional Advisor, Disease Prevention and Control, Programme on Non-Communicable Diseases, PAHO Washington, D.C. (conchaal@paho.org)
- Dora Caballero, National Consultant, Health Promotion and Protection, PAHO Bolivia (dcaballe@bol.ops-oms.org)
- Thelma Gálvez, Consultant, PAHO Chile (galvezt@chi.ops-oms.org)

**D. Organizaciones intergubernamentales
Intergovernmental organizations**

Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID)/Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

- Maria Loreto Biehl, Regional Programme Coordinator (loretob@iadb.org)

Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO)/Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences

- Teresa Valdés, Coordinator, Gender Studies, FLACSO Chile (agenero@flacso.cl)

Organización de los Estados Americanos (CIM/OEA)/Organization of American States (OAS)

- Beatriz Lovesio, Technical Team, IACW/OAS Uruguay (blovesio@montevideo.com.uy)

**E. Otros
Others**

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)/Swedish Embassy

- Ulrika Hjerstrand, First Secretary, Programme Officer, Bolivia (ulrika.hjerstrand@sida.se)

**F. Secretaría
Secretariat**

Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)/Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

- Enrique Ordaz, Director, Statistics and Economic Projections Division
- Sonia Montaña, Chief, Women and Development Unit (smontano@eclac.cl)
- Nieves Rico, Social Affairs Officer, Women and Development Unit (nrico@eclac.cl)
- Diane Alméras, Social Affairs Officer, Women and Development Unit (dalmeras@eclac.cl)
- Vivian Milosavljevic, Consultant, Women and Development Unit (vmilosavljevic@eclac.cl)

Sede Subregional de la CEPAL para el Caribe/ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

- Roberta Clarke, Social Affairs Officer (rclarke@eclacpos.org)

Sede Subregional de la CEPAL en México/ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Mexico

- Pilar Vidal, Women and Development Programme (pvidal@un.org.mx)

DOCUMENTATION**Working paper:**

ECLAC, “Violencia contra la mujer en América Latina y el Caribe: una propuesta para medir su magnitud y evolución”, Women and Development Unit.

Background papers:

Acosta, Gladys, *Conceptos sobre la violencia de género*, UNIFEM.

Castillo, Walter, “El sistema nacional de información estadística en Bolivia, Instituto Nacional de Estadística”, PowerPoint presentation.

ECLAC-Port of Spain, “Report of the ECLAC/CDCC ad hoc expert group meeting on strategies to end violence against women: data collection systems for domestic violence in the Caribbean”.

Concha Eastman, Alberto, “Indicadores de género en violencia contra la mujer en América Latina y el Caribe”, PowerPoint presentation, PAHO.

Cristiane da Silva, Kelly, *La violencia contra las mujeres y la generación de información en las comisariías especializadas de atención a las mujeres-DEAMs Brasil: Notas metodológicas de una experiencia de investigación*, PPGAS, Universidad de Brasilia.

Gracia, Jorge María, *Indicadores de violencia de género en España*, Instituto Nacional de Estadística.

Hazelle, Rosalyn, *Model of St. Kitts and Nevis Programme on Violence Against Women and Children*, Ministry of Community, Social Development and Gender Affairs.

Hedman, Birgitta, “Estadísticas de género”, PowerPoint presentation, Sweden.

Instituto de la Mujer, *II Plan integral contra la violencia doméstica*, Spain.

Jara, Lily, *Hacia un sistema de estadísticas sobre violencia contra las mujeres*, UNIFEM-RA, Ecuador.

Larraín, Soledad, “Detección y análisis, prevalencia de la violencia intrafamiliar”, PowerPoint presentation, Chile.

Loli, Silvia, *Estándares internacionales y lineamientos aplicables frente a la problemática de la violencia familiar*, Programa de Derechos Humanos Flora Tristán, Peru.

Ministerio de Salud, *Violentus 1 - Construir la paz o dejar la violencia en paz. La violencia intrafamiliar, magnitud y costos para los servicios de salud en Panamá*, Panama.

OAS, *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women* (Convention of Belém do Pará).

WHO/PAHO, *Guías para la vigilancia epidemiológica de violencia y lesiones*.