
mujer y desarrollo

Violence against women in
couples: Latin America and the
Caribbean.

**A proposal for measuring its incidence
and trends**

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ECLAC

Women and Development Unit

**Inter-agency project "Making gender indicators available for
policy-making"**

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This document was prepared by Diane Alméras, Rosa Bravo, Vivian Milosavljevic, Sonia Montañó and María Nieves Rico of ECLAC Women and Development Unit as part of the inter-agency project “Making gender indicators available for policy-making”, with financial support from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The document was prepared for 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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Contents

Abstract	5
Introduction	7
I. Violence against women in the region: history of a struggle	11
From the international legal framework to national policies	14
II. Measuring violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean	21
A. A representative survey	22
1. Methodological and operational aspects	26
2. Substantive contributions	26
3. Institutional arrangements	27
B. Administrative records	28
III. Proposed indicators	35
A. Description of indicators	35
B. Objectives and rationale of the proposal	37
C. Indicators based on survey information	38
1. Conceptual and methodological considerations	38
2. Proposed indicators	40
D. Indicators based on information from administrative records	42
1. Conceptual and methodological considerations	42
2. Proposed indicators	44
E. Institutional arrangements	44

Bibliography	45
Serie Mujer y desarrollo: issues published	51

Tables

Table 1 National legislation adopted in Latin America and the Caribbean to combat violence against women.....	18
Table 2 Surveys carried out in Latin America and the Caribbean to measure violence against women.....	23
Table 3 Measuring violence on the basis of police and legal records.....	31

Boxes

Box 1 Definitions of violence.....	13
Box 2 Actions of United Nations agencies to combat violence against women since the Fourth World Conference on Women.....	16
Box 3 Surveys reviewed.....	27
Box 4 National experiences in data collection.....	29
Box 5 Lack of national records.....	29
Box 6 National experiences with administrative records.....	30
Box 7 Lack of data comparability.....	31

Abstract

The present document was prepared by the ECLAC Women and Development Unit for 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). The document reflects the inputs which the participants provided for the working paper submitted by ECLAC at that event. It is a tool for measuring the incidence of violence against women in intimate relationships, as well as the main characteristics of the phenomenon.

The first part describes how the problem of violence against women came to be part of national, regional and international public agendas. One of the problems detected in the enforcement of the relevant laws is the lack of sufficient and adequate follow-up mechanisms for monitoring the application of penalties. This document represents an attempt to meet that need by providing indicators that make it possible to carry out the consultation processes that result in the formulation of public policy.

The second part presents a classification and non-exhaustive analysis of the surveys and administrative records used to measure violence against women in recent years. This part also highlights the challenges that should be analyzed and considered in adapting and improving such sources as statistically valid inputs for the construction of indicators.

The third and final part presents a minimum set of indicators in the form of a proposal to be considered by the countries of the region. The proposal aims to strike a balance between what is ideal and what is possible by attempting to complement efforts already under way while incorporating characteristics, purposes and objectives that go beyond the bare minimum. The document concludes by suggesting institutional arrangements for ensuring that the implementation of this set of indicators is integrated into the process of institutionalizing public policies with a gender perspective.

Introduction

The present document was prepared by the ECLAC Women and Development Unit for 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).

That meeting was the result of a process of coordination between specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in response to the requests made by Governments of the region through the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Statistical Conference of the Americas, and addressed to ECLAC in its capacity as technical secretariat for those Governments.

At the thirty-first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, Chile, 13–15 September 2000), the participating Governments agreed to harmonize sex-disaggregated statistics and encourage cooperation between national machineries for the advancement of women and statistical offices in each country.

Similarly, the participants in the first meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, Chile, 9–11 May 2001) proposed that measures should be taken for the construction of the gender indicators needed for the appropriate design of policies that regarded gender equity as a requirement for development. In accordance with the procedures agreed upon at the meeting and the resolution adopted by the Conference concerning the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, two technical meetings on gender statistics and indicators were included in the Programme, which covered the period from June 2001 to June 2003. The conclusions of those meetings were expected to provide valuable inputs for future discussions of the issue in the context of the Conference.

Bolivia offered to host the two technical meetings on gender statistics and indicators and requested the Commission to provide technical cooperation and advisory services in order to identify sources of financing. At the meeting of the Statistical Conference, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) supported the proposal and expressed an interest in participating. Following some consultation, it was decided that the first meeting would be devoted to an analysis of regional experiences in measuring violence against women. Also involved in this initiative were the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Government of Italy, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and all the entities represented in the working group on gender indicators of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE)¹.

The objective of the first meeting was to collect experiences in measuring violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean, analyse achievements and outstanding challenges and make progress in defining concepts and methodologies for designing and calculating indicators of violence against women. Such indicators must be based on reliable, comparable statistical information compiled at regular intervals, and were essential for the formulation and follow-up of public policies to prevent and eradicate violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Producers and users of statistical information on violence against women were therefore invited to attend the meeting to present their experiences in the region and to share assessments, lessons learned and suggestions for furthering the common goal of devising appropriate regional indicators for the formulation of public policies.

The present document reflects the inputs which the participants provided for the working paper submitted by ECLAC at that meeting. It is a tool for measuring the incidence and main characteristics of violence against women. The document takes into account both the lessons learned in similar experiences and the institutional, political and budgetary limitations that must be considered in proposing a tool for addressing the region's top priorities, without prejudice to each country's freedom to seek answers to specific questions that reflect particular national or subregional characteristics.

The first part of the document describes how the problem of violence against women came to be part of the public agenda; the second part presents a classification and non-exhaustive analysis of the surveys and administrative records used to measure violence against women in recent years, highlighting the main lessons learned.

¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), ECLAC, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Statistics Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNFPA, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization / Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNIFEM.

The third and final part presents a minimum set of indicators in the form of a proposal to be considered by the countries of the region. The proposal does not attempt to cover all forms of violence against women; rather, it is limited, as a point of departure, to violence perpetrated by an intimate partner. Moreover, the aim is not to produce a methodological document, but to identify the information required from the point of view of users and for the purposes of formulating public policies.

I. Violence against women in the region: history of a struggle

Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the regions that has focused the most attention on combating violence against women. The struggle has been going on for over 20 years, ever since the women's movement raised the profile of one of the main hidden crimes that plague our societies. Although the present document does not aim to describe in detail the history leading up to this, combating violence against women has involved a long process of constructing social and institutional networks, reformulating legal frameworks, establishing rules and institutions, designing methodologies, training those responsible for implementing policy, raising awareness among the media and opening an ongoing debate aimed at involving all stakeholders in the prevention and eradication of this scourge, which has been identified as a violation of human rights.

This process has occurred in many interconnected domains: at the local level, where non-governmental organizations identified and reported the problem and began to set up specialized services for battered women; at the international level, where the issue gave rise to one of the most important human rights debates, which resulted in the recognition by Governments that violence against women was a public-policy issue; and at the national level, where women's offices and other sectoral bodies came up with violence prevention and other plans involving legal, police, health and education authorities. Recently, there has also been growing interest in the issue at the municipal level and the increasing involvement of new disciplines that have elucidated the link between violence against women and various aspects of development.

The human-rights-based approach has drawn attention to the problem as an area of concern in many domains. Seen as a public health problem, the issue is regarded as part of the physical and mental health that everyone has the right to enjoy. As a legal issue, it has been linked to efforts to modernize the justice system, penal codes and institutions responsible for defending these rights. When considered as a problem linked to poverty, it has been associated with new poverty reduction approaches that see its eradication as essential for giving people the minimum capacity needed to lead a decent life: violence is a component of poverty and may also aggravate it.

In keeping with development models in which the language of economics pervades the design of public policies, violence has also been studied from the point of view of its economic consequences for public expenditure, the additional cost to health services and the benefits of eradication in terms of freeing up attention for other social ills. Violence against women is also a concern of public safety policy and is analysed in terms of its relations with wider concerns about personal security.

Violence as a product of patriarchal societies that sustain gender discrimination has been studied as a cultural phenomenon whose symbolic dimensions condition human behaviour. There is therefore a need for preventive policies based on education and on cultural and symbolic changes. More recent studies on masculinity also deal with the issue, as part of a wide forum for debate where new knowledge and assessments lead to other questions that, in turn, result in more precise answers for the purposes of public policy.

As part of the same process, the language, strategies and institutional arrangements created to deal with violence against women have been extended to all forms of violence, such as that against children, older persons and the disabled. In many countries, this approach has been replaced by a general concern about domestic violence. However, this replacement of women with a more collective subject such as the family has not been immune to debate and controversial assessments. The present document remains within the current conceptual, legal and institutional limits and does not aim to deal with all forms of violence affecting the family.

As far as knowledge and research are concerned, various academic bodies have contributed new studies and discoveries. Furthermore, specialized cooperation entities have supported preventive and other relevant programmes, awareness-raising campaigns and interdisciplinary dialogue to address violence as a multidimensional problem. As can be seen in part II of this document, violence has also become a concern in the field of statistics, in view of the need for new information and greater knowledge in order to improve the quality of public policies.

Box 1

DEFINITIONS OF VIOLENCE

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993a) and the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women* (1994) of the Organization of American States (OAS) provide concise definitions of violence against women, recommendations for action and the commitments that Governments should undertake to implement such actions. It is therefore important to highlight the definitions included in those instruments.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines such violence as:

“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.”

This encompasses, but is not limited to, “(a) physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; (b) physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution; and (c) physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs”.

The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará) states that:

“Violence against women constitutes a violation of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, and impairs or nullifies the observance, enjoyment and exercise of such rights and freedoms”,

And gives the following definition:

“Violence against women shall be understood as any act or conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or the private sphere. ”

(...)

“Violence against women shall be understood to include physical, sexual and psychological violence:

- that occurs within the family or domestic unit or within any other interpersonal relationship, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the woman, including, among others, rape, battery and sexual abuse;
- that occurs in the community and is perpetrated by any person, including, among others, rape, sexual abuse, torture, trafficking in persons, forced prostitution, kidnapping and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as in educational institutions, health facilities or any other place; and
- that is perpetrated or condoned by the State or its agents regardless of where it occurs”.

From the international legal framework to national policies

Through what has been a long process, women have been achieving full recognition of the discrimination they suffer and the need to overcome that situation through the adoption of legal instruments protecting women's rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1993) and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, or Convention of Belém do Pará (1994).² These legally binding conventions –one universal and the other regional– are genuine catalogues of rights that are continuously enriched by the further development of the relevant legal doctrine through the various international conferences of the United Nations³ and the recommendations made by the entities responsible for monitoring their implementation.⁴ In addition, there are regional and international instruments that are non-binding, but serve to guide States in implementing actions to overcome gender inequalities. One example is the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, whose implementation was strengthened and extended beyond 2001 by the Lima Consensus.⁵

At the international level, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has issued recommendations to serve as guidelines for the interpretation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In 1992 the Committee adopted general recommendation 19, which provides that the definition of discrimination includes gender-based violence, since it inhibits women's enjoyment and effective exercise of their human rights, and that such violence includes both public and private acts. General recommendation 21 of 1994 refers to equality in marriage and family relations and points out that inequality in marriage restricts women's ability to enjoy and exercise their human rights and curtails their economic, legal and personal autonomy. The recommendation states that, historically, human activity in public and private life has been viewed differently; that, in our culture, women are assigned tasks that have less prestige and are treated as inferior to those of men; and that differential legal treatment represents discrimination against women. The recommendation also sets precedents in terms of the family by interpreting it in a broad sense to include *de facto* unions and calling for these unions to be given the same treatment as legally recognized marriages.⁶

² In addition to raising the profile of violence against women and defining the problem from a gender perspective, the Convention also established inter-American mechanisms of protection. These include the duty of States parties to include in their national reports to the Inter-American Commission of Women information on measures adopted, the possibility for States parties to request of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights advisory opinions on the interpretation of the Convention and the fact that any person or group of persons, or any non-governmental entity legally recognized in one or more States members of OAS, may lodge petitions with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights containing denunciations or complaints of violations of article 7 of the Convention by a State party (chapter IV, articles 10-12).

³ The contributions of women's movements were taken into account at various international conferences, such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (Istanbul, 1996), the Millennium Assembly (New York, 2000), and in international conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action specifically states that: "The human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights" (part I, para. 18) and "urges the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women, both hidden and overt" (part II, para. 39). It also states that treaty monitoring bodies should enable women to make more effective use of existing implementation procedures in their pursuit of full and equal enjoyment of human rights and non-discrimination and that States should be encouraged to supply information on the *de jure* and *de facto* situation of women in their reports to treaty monitoring bodies.

⁴ United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, respectively.

⁵ The Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, was adopted at the sixth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mar del Plata, Argentina, September 1994), and the Lima Consensus was adopted at the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Lima, Peru, February 2000).

⁶ See the website of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women:
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations.htm>.

In the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, member States were asked to examine systems of indicators to measure progress in the realization of the rights set forth in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, was encouraged to continue the examination of an optional protocol to the Covenant.⁷ Moreover, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women were asked to examine the possibility of introducing the right of petition for violations of women's human rights through the preparation of an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Protocol, adopted in 1999, is a legal instrument that supplements the Convention by establishing a communications procedure for reporting violations of the Convention and enabling women to make individual complaints directly to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Protocol also strengthens the Committee by giving it real authority to require States to implement its recommendations, thereby making these recommendations binding.⁸

At its fiftieth session, held in 1994, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights decided to appoint a Special Rapporteur on violence against women, and proposed the creation of the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights⁹ and the establishment of an International Criminal Court. The post was indeed created and the High Commissioner now works in coordination with the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. As for the need to document human rights violations and to establish indicators in that area, the Commission also mentioned the need for statistical information to support the work of the Special Rapporteur.

In June 2002, the General Assembly, in the document "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action", adopted at its twenty-third special session ("Beijing +5"), recommended that all appropriate measures should be taken to eliminate discrimination and violence against women and girls by any person, organization or enterprise, including research and the establishment of national coordinating mechanisms to encourage the exchange of information.¹⁰

In summary, the most important achievements at the international level may be said to include the following (Chiarotti, 1999):

- Reaffirmation that the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls are part of universal human rights and are not subject to historical or cultural traditions, and that the universal nature of these rights and freedoms is beyond question;¹¹
- Acknowledgement of the interdependence of public and private spheres of activity;¹²
- Demonstration that human rights may be enjoyed in both the public and private spheres and that they can therefore be violated in both areas;
- Recognition that there are various forms of family and that they are all entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support.¹³

⁷ Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, part II, paragraph 75.

⁸ As of June 2002, 17 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean had signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention and 11 of them had ratified it (Bolivia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela).

⁹ The post was first held by José Ayala Lasso of Ecuador, and more recently by Mary Robinson of Ireland.

¹⁰ See Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), paragraphs 68 to 70.

¹¹ See the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html>.

¹² Copenhagen Declaration adopted at the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), and Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), chapter IV (A) paragraph, 4.1.

¹³ Copenhagen Declaration; reaffirmed in the Beijing Platform for Action.

- Agreement that violence against women constitutes a violation of their human rights and fundamental freedoms;¹⁴
- Explicit recognition of the gap between formal (de jure) equality and real (de facto) equality and of the fact that the existence of rights does not automatically guarantee their effective enjoyment.¹⁵

All these achievements were pushed forward by the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), as described in the following box:

Box 2

ACTIONS OF UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SINCE THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

- In May 1996, the World Health Assembly at its forty-ninth session, adopted a resolution declaring violence to be a public health priority. The World Health Organization (WHO) is carrying out a multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence in conjunction with the Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.
- In September 1998, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) convened a meeting of 400 experts from 37 countries to discuss the causes and costs of domestic violence, as well as policies and programmes to combat it. IDB is currently financing research and demonstration projects on violence against women in six Latin American countries.
- In 1998, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) launched regional campaigns in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean to raise awareness of the problem of violence against women worldwide. UNIFEM also runs the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women, which has contributed US\$ 3.3 million to 71 projects around the world since 1996.
- In 1999, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) declared violence against women to be a public health priority.
- In 2001, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) organized the "Symposium 2001: Gender Violence, Health and Rights in the Americas" (Cancun, Mexico, 4–7 June 2001), at which a series of recommendations were formulated on general strategies, prevention and protection.

Source: Web site of the Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs (<http://www.jhuccp.org/prs/sl11/111boxes.stm#world>); UNIFEM (1999), *A world free of violence against women and The trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women* (<http://www.unifem.undp.org/trustfund>); UNFPA (1999), *Violence against girls and women*, New York, 24 pp. documents of "Symposium 2001: Gender Violence, Health and Rights in the Americas" (Cancun, Mexico, 4–7 June 2001)

At the regional level, the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, at its fifth session (1991), adopted a resolution on women and violence that recommended a series of actions that member States and United Nations agencies should take to address the region's serious lack of information and research on violence against women.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid., paragraph. 234.

¹⁵ Ibid., paragraphs. 217, 218 and 219.

¹⁶ See ECLAC (1991), Report of the Fifth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, 16 to 19 September 1991) (LC/G.1684 (CRM.5/6)).

Subsequently, the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, also referred to human rights¹⁷ and established the strategic guideline of “Ensuring the universal, inalienable, indivisible and integral nature of all the human rights (civil, political, economic, social and cultural) of women, as well as consistent respect for and protection of these rights in a healthful environment at all times and in all places”,¹⁸ with the strategic objective of consolidating “full respect for the human rights (civil, political, economic, social and cultural) of women in the region, within a context where priority is given to the elimination of gender-based violence and discrimination and to the rights of poor and uprooted women, taking ethnic and racial differences into account”.¹⁹ Later, in the Lima Consensus, member States stressed the need to pay particular attention to all forms of gender-based violence and its root causes, including the reproduction of a culture of violence.²⁰

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the most significant progress in relation to violence has been in the area of legislation, given that the Americas is the only region that has a specific convention concerning violence against women. The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women was signed in Belém do Pará on 9 June 1994 and, to date, has been ratified by 30 countries in the region.²¹

On the basis of new conceptual frameworks that have been developed, the countries of the region have been adopting national laws (see table 1) and developing national plans to eradicate violence against women. Such plans usually involve cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation with civil society. Various studies have shown that a large proportion of society accepts such policies and recognizes violence as a social problem.

A general analysis of national legislation concerning violence (Chiarotti, 1999) shows that not all such laws reflect the clear objectives laid down in the Convention of Belém do Pará, whose aims of preventing, punishing and eradicating violence against women are somewhat diluted in certain laws that penalize domestic violence without mentioning gender-based violence or attempting to address its causes. In some cases, judges paid given more attention to child victims of violence than to women victims in couples.

One of the problems detected in the enforcement of the relevant laws is the lack of sufficient and adequate follow-up mechanisms for monitoring the application of penalties. It is to answer this need that indicators are now proposed to facilitate the consultation process that leads to the formulation of public policy. The lack of statistics on violence against women is one of the main obstacles at the regional level. No government can design suitable policies to combat a problem without knowing the scale of the phenomenon. Indicators of the incidence, trends and characteristics of violence against women are therefore essential.

¹⁷ Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, strategic area V: Human rights, peace and violence, pp. 46 and ff.

¹⁸ Ibid., strategic guideline V, p. 47.

¹⁹ Ibid., strategic objective V.1, p. 47.

²⁰ ECLAC (2000), Lima Consensus, adopted at the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Lima, Peru, 8-10 February 2000), LC/G.2087 (CRM.8/6).

²¹ Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Table 1

NATIONAL LEGISLATION ADOPTED IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

LATIN AMERICA	
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law 24,417 on protection against family violence (1994) ▪ Law 25,087 amending the Penal Code (1999)
Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law 1,674 on family and domestic violence (1995) ▪ Law 1,678 amending the Penal Code in matters relating to sexual offences (1997)
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislative Decree 107, giving legal force to the Inter-American Convention on the prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, Belém do Pará (1995)
Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law 19,325 on family violence (1995) ▪ Law 19,617 amending the Penal Code in matters relating to sexual offences (1999)
Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law 294 to prevent, remedy and punish family violence (1996) ▪ Law 360 on offences against sexual freedom and human dignity (1997) ▪ Law 575 partly amending Law 294 (2000)
Costa Rica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law 7586 on domestic violence (1996)
Dominican Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law 24-97 on family violence, defining the offences of domestic violence, sexual harassment and incest
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law 103 on violence against women and the family (1995) ▪ Law reforming the basic law on the judiciary (1997) ▪ Law 106 reforming the Penal Code in matters relating to sexual offences (1998)
El Salvador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decree-Law 902 on family violence (1997)
Guatemala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decree-Law 97-96 to prevent, punish and eradicate family violence
Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law for the prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women (1997)
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law on addressing and preventing family violence (1997)
Nicaragua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law creating the Women's and Children's Police Service, included in the legislation establishing the National Police Service (1996) ▪ Law 230 recognizing psychological abuse as an offence (1996)
Panama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law 27 on offences of family violence and child abuse (1995)
Paraguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law 1600 on domestic violence against women (2000)
Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law 26,260 establishing the policy of the State and society on family violence (1993) ▪ Law 26,763 establishing mechanisms to provide greater protection for victims (1997) ▪ Law 26,788 reforming the Penal Code by incorporating, as an aggravating circumstance, the existence of a family relationship between the aggressor and the victim (1997) ▪ Law 26,770 reforming the Penal Code, establishing that marriage does not vitiate grounds for the prosecution of crimes against sexual freedom (1997) ▪ Adoption of the Regulations of the Single Text of Law 26,260 ▪ Law 27,115 providing for public criminal prosecution of offences against sexual freedom (1999) ▪ Law 27,306 amending the Single Text of Law 26,260 (2000)
Uruguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law 16,707 on public safety, adding a new article to the Penal Code (art. 321 bis) defining domestic violence and establishing penalties (1995)
Venezuela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law on violence against women and the family (1998)

Table 1 (conclusion)

THE CARIBBEAN	
Anguila	Reform of the Domestic Violence Act (1996)
Antigua and Barbuda	Domestic violence legislation (1999)
Bahamas	Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act (1991)
Barbados	Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act (1992)
Belize	Domestic Violence Act (1992)
British Virgin Islands	Domestic Violence Act (1995)
Dominica	Sexual Offenses Act (1998)
Guyana	Domestic Violence Act (1996)
Jamaica	Domestic Violence Act (1996)
Netherlands Antilles	Criminalization of marital rape (1999)
Puerto Rico	Domestic Violence Prevention and Intervention Act (Law 54) (1989)
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act
Trinidad and Tobago	Domestic Violence Act (1999)

Source: Argentina (2000), *Mujeres en Argentina. Estado de situación a cinco años de Beijing*, Buenos Aires, Women's Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship; Bolivia (2000), *Informe 2000. Cinco años después de Beijing: Poder, oportunidades y autodeterminación para las mujeres en el nuevo siglo*, La Paz, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Planning, Office of the Deputy Minister for Gender, Generational and Family Affairs; Ecuador (1999), *Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador (SIISE)*, Technical Secretariat of the Social Front, Ministry of Social Development/ National Women's Council, Quito (CD-ROM); Mexico (2000a), *Sistema de Indicadores para el Seguimiento de la Situación de la Mujer en México (SISESIM)*, National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) (CD-ROM); Peru (1999), *Género: Equidad y disparidad: Una revisión en la antesala del nuevo milenio*, Lima, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Human Development (PROMUDEH)/ UNFPA/ National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI); Dominican Republic (2000a), *Diagnóstico de género en la reforma y modernización*, Santo Domingo, Ministry of Women's Affairs/ UNDP/ UNFPA; Nieves Rico, "Gender-based violence: A human rights issue", *Mujer y desarrollo* series, No. 16 (LC/L.957), Santiago, Chile, ECLAC, 1997; Irma Arriagada, "Políticas sociales, familia y trabajo en la América Latina de fin de siglo", *Políticas sociales* series, No. 21 (LC/L.1058), Santiago, Chile, ECLAC, September 1997; Hannah Binstock, "Violence within couples: legal treatment; review of progress and results", *Mujer y desarrollo* series, No. 23 (LC/L.1123), Santiago, Chile, ECLAC, September 1998; ECLAC, *Directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Women and Development Unit (http://www.eclac.cl/mujer/dirección/conferencia_regional.asp), October 1999; ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, "The Caribbean Subregional Review and Appraisal Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action," draft document presented at the Third Caribbean Ministerial Conference on Women, Port of Spain, 5-7 October 1999; national reports submitted by countries in response to the questionnaire sent out by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women in 1999; and periodic reports submitted by countries under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

II. Measuring violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean

Until a few years ago in Latin America and the Caribbean, the prevailing trend in public policy –in the legislative, judicial and executive branches and in much of society at large –was the idea that relations in the private sphere were of no concern to the State. Accordingly, no attempts were made to measure violence that occurred in that context.

As the problem of violence against women in couples received more public and political exposure and became the subject of specific legislation, the need for reliable information on the incidence and characteristics of the phenomenon became apparent.

The countries first sought to measure the phenomenon through qualitative and quantitative exploratory studies. These researches made it possible to better identify and understand the factors involved, and demonstrated that the problem was multidimensional; it also furnished evidence that the problem's sociocultural origin and the dynamics of relationships made it a highly complex phenomenon, which implied that quantifying the problem would involve developing and implementing strategies, instruments and methodologies that were specific and relevant to the problem and the context in which it occurs.

Subsequently, quantitative measurement initiatives focused on the use of population surveys and of administrative records containing information provided by victim-assistance services. This was due to a recognition of the usefulness of such sources as a potential means of developing indicators on the situation and extent of the violence affecting the total female population, as well as the women who used the relevant services.

To date, many initiatives have been carried out using one or both information sources and have shown that violence against women is an immense problem. However, a review of such initiatives reveals that many countries in the region do not yet have basic information to measure the incidence of the problem and formulate indicators. Countries that do have the information available do not have a set of indicators to represent the scope of the phenomenon on an homologous basis that would be comparable over time, both within and between countries. Furthermore, the measurements carried out to date have used different approaches that affect the comparability of the results. These differences are due to the countries' different sociocultural contexts and to the variety of measurement methodologies used.

Other conclusions and challenges can be drawn from these experiences and will be analyzed and taken into account in order to adapt and improve these sources as statistically valid inputs for the construction of indicators. The following section presents a review of the current situation regarding both types of source.

A. Representative surveys

At the national level, national women's offices have been the driving force behind various surveys, whereas national statistical institutes have been less involved in that process. Some surveys have been carried out at the initiative of non-governmental organizations, but most of them have involved collaboration between women's offices and sectorial ministries, particularly in the area of health. Although the information obtained is insufficient for reaching definite conclusions, it can be observed that international organizations have played a mayor role by sponsoring and providing technical cooperation in the conceptualization, design and conduct out of the studies.²²

The surveys referred to in this report reflect many, if not all, of the possibilities and limitations that can be gleaned from these experiences.

The surveys considered are presented in table 2, along with information (where available) on the year of implementation; the executing, financing or sponsoring institutions; sample size; geographical coverage; target population; age of survey respondents; type of violence measured: physical (P), psychological (PSY) and sexual (S); and incidence estimate defined as the proportion of women who are victims of violence.

²² WHO/PAHO has provided advisory services on the use of the epidemiological approach in this research. The main objectives include estimating the prevalence and incidence of the phenomenon and the burden of illness resulting from violence against the female population. IDB has focused on the socio-economic impact of violence by estimating its cost to each country and the effects on women and children in terms of restricting their ability to lead normal lives. Demographic and health surveys (DHS) were initially developed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in conjunction with government organizations in developing countries. Because they are multi-purpose studies that seek to address a large number of women's health issues, the questions concerning violence are more limited than those in surveys with more specific objectives.

Table 2

SURVEYS CARRIED OUT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN TO MEASURE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Country	Institutions	Sample size	Geographical coverage	Age and population surveyed		Type	Results
Bolivia 1997/98	World Health Organization / Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), Ministry of Health and Social Security, Office of the Deputy, Minister for Gender and Family Issues, Government of the Netherlands	289	3 Municipalities	20+	All women	P, PSY	21% of women reported being victims of psychological violence, 17.9% of non-life-threatening physical violence and 13.9% of life-threatening violence
Chile 1993	National Women's Service (SERNAM)/ Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)	1000	Santiago Metropolitan Region and provinces	22-55	Women who are currently married /common-law spouses	P, PSY	26% reported at least one incident of partner violence, 11% had experienced at least one violent incident and 15% reported at least one less serious violent incident
Chile 1996	Regional development fund (VI Region), National Women's Service (SERNAM)	400	VI Region	22+	Women who are currently married /common-law spouses	P, PSY, S	15% suffered physical and psychological violence, 3.7% sexual and psychological violence and 62.8% only psychological violence
Chile 1997**	Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), TIME (company)	360	...	15-49	Women who have been married/common-law spouses	P, PSY, S	35.5% have suffered physical and psychological violence, 71.7% psychological violence, 20.3% sexual and psychological violence
Chile 2001	National Women's Service (SERNAM), Centre for Public Policy Analysis (University of Chile)	2721	Metropolitan Region and IX Region	15-49	Women who are/have been in a couple	P, PSY, S	In the Metropolitan Region, 50.3% have experienced violence in a relationship. 34.1% of those women have suffered physical and/or sexual violence and 16.3% psychological violence
Colombia 1995 (DHS)	Colombian Family Welfare Association	6097	National	15-49	Women who are currently married /common-law spouses	P	19% had been physically assaulted by a partner at some time
Costa Rica 1994	...	1312	San José Metropolitan area	...	...	P, PSY	75% suffered psychological violence and 10% physical violence

Table 2 (continuation)

Country	Institutions	Sample size	Geographical coverage	Age and population surveyed		Type	Results
Guatemala 1990	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) /Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO)	1000	Sacatepequez	...	...	...	49% had suffered violence, 47% by a partner
Haiti 1996	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Haitian Research and Action Centre for the Advancement of Women (CHREPROF)	1705	National	...	...	...	70% have suffered domestic violence, 36% at the hands of a partner
Mexico 1997	...	650	Metropolitan Guadalajara	...	Women who have been married/common-law spouses	P	16% of women who are separated or in a couple report having been physically abused after the age of 15
Mexico 1996	State Council on Population	1064	Monterrey	15+	Women who have been married/common-law spouses	P	52% reported having been physically abused by a partner at least once; 27% reported having been physically abused in the past year
Mexico 1999	National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI)	...	Mexico City metropolitan area	...	Interviewers carried out within households	P, PSY, S	No specific information about the situation of women. The most common form of violence was emotional abuse, (99.2%), followed by intimidation (16.4%), physical violence (11.2%) and sexual abuse (1.1%).
Nicaragua 1996	Association of Professional Women for Democracy, Department of Preventive Medicine, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, Umea University	360	León	15-49	Women who have been married/common-law spouses	P	...
Nicaragua 1997	Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	378	Managua	15-49	Women living with a partner at time of survey	P, PSY, S	45.8% have suffered psychological violence, 28% serious physical violence, 30.2% moderate physical violence, 17.7% sexual violence and 52.6% psychological, physical or sexual violence in the past 12 months

Country	Institutions	Sample size	Geographical coverage	Age and population surveyed		Type	Results
Nicaragua 1998 (DHS)	National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC), Ministry of Health (MINSA)	8507	National	15-49	Women who have been married/common-law spouses	P, S	27.6% have suffered physical violence, 10.2% sexual violence and 28.7% physical and sexual violence either in the past year or previously
Paraguay 1995/96 (DHS)	Paraguayan Centre for Population Studies, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	5940	National (except Chaco region)	15-49	Women who have been married/common-law spouses	P, PSY	31.1% have been verbally insulted, 9.5% reported physical violence
Peru 1997	Peruvian Studies Institute	359	Metropolitan Lima	17-55	Women who are currently married /common-law spouses	P, PSY, S	...
Peru 2000 (DHS)	National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI)	12933	National	15-49	Women who have been married/common-law spouses	P, PSY	41% of these women had been physically assaulted by their spouse or partner. 34% had been subjected to psychological control, 48% to unpleasant situations (shouting and insults) and 25% to threats
Uruguay 1997	Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Sybilla consultants	545	Montevideo and Canelones	22-55	Women who have been married/common-law spouses	P, PSY, S	...

Source: *Bolivia:* Ministry of Health and Social Security (1999), *Salud Pública y Violencia Doméstica/Intrafamiliar*, prevalence survey carried out with support from the Government of the Netherlands; *Chile:* 1993: S.Larrain (1994), *Violencia familiar: La situación de la mujer en Chile*, Santiago, Chile, Editorial Universitaria; 1996: N. Rico and M.L. Navarro (1997), *Estudio de prevalencia de la violencia intrafamiliar contra la mujer en la VI región*, Rancagua; 1997: *National Report*, Regional Project RLA/97/014, national reports on gender violence, UNDP, (<http://www.undp.org/rblac/gender/chile.htm>); 2001: M. Ferrer (2001), *Detección y análisis de la prevalencia de la violencia intrafamiliar* (<http://www.capp.uchile.cl/boletin/julio2001/4.html>); *Colombia:* Profamilia, *National Demographic and Health Survey 1995*, Institute for Resource Development/Macro International, Inc; *Costa Rica:* E. Quiroz and O. Barrantes (1994), "¿Y vivieron felices para siempre?" In IDB, *Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Framework for Action*, Washington, D.C.; *Guatemala:* A. Mehrotra (1998), *Gender and Legislation in Latin America and the Caribbean*, chapter IV "Gender Violence", UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (<http://www.undp.org/rblac/gender/legislation/violence.htm>); *Haiti:* M. Buvinic, A. Morrison and M.I. Shifter (1992), *Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Framework for Action*, Women's Leadership Conference of the Americas Working Groups (<http://www.icrw.org/gwl/gwl-wlca-wp3c.htm>) and (<http://windowsonhaiti.com/w99351.shtml>); *Mexico:* 1996 and 1997: M. Granados Shiroma (1996), *Salud reproductiva y violencia contra la mujer: un análisis desde la perspectiva de género*, Nuevo León, Mexican Population Association, State Council on Population, El Colegio de México, in *Population Reports* (http://www.jhuccp.org/pr/11/111tables.stm#table_1); 1999: National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) (1999), *Violencia Intrafamiliar*, 1999 survey, methodological document and results, at Isis International, (<http://www.isis.cl/mujereshoy/ viol/dicenque.htm>); *Nicaragua:* 1996: Ellsberg et al. (1996), *Candies in hell: Domestic violence against women in Nicaragua*, Managua, Puntos de Encuentro, at Isis International, (<http://www.isis.cl/mujereshoy/viol/dicenque.htm>); 1997: A. Morrison and M. B. Orlando (1997), *The Socio-Economic Impact of Domestic Violence against Women in Chile and Nicaragua*, IDB, Washington, D.C., at Isis International, (<http://www.isis.cl/mujereshoy/viol/dicenque.htm>); 1998: ENDESA 1998; *Paraguay:* Paraguayan Centre for Population Studies, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (1996), *Encuesta nacional de demografía y de salud reproductiva 1995-1996*, in *Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Framework for Action*, IDB, Washington, D.C.; *Peru:* 1997: WHO, *Prevalence of violence against women by an intimate male partner* (http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/vaw/prevalence.htm); 2000: National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI), *Encuesta Demográfica y de Salud Familiar 2000*, Lima.

* Includes sponsoring, financing and executing institutions. ** The survey was representative in socio-economic terms. ... : No information available

The review of these experiences reveals general trends in methodological and operational aspects, in substantive contributions and in institutionalized arrangements for carrying out research.

1. Methodological and operational aspects

- Although there is some consensus on the definitions of types of violence (physical, sexual and psychological), from the operational point of view, there is no standard categorization of the abuse or acts of violence that make up each type. This, in turn, affects the comparability of different research results.
- Geographical coverage is variable. Most studies cover populations in capital cities and smaller geographical units on the basis of representative samples. Nationwide studies covering urban and rural areas are more common in demographic and health surveys (DHS).
- The target population has tended to be confined to women who are currently married or cohabiting or, even more commonly, to those who have been in that situation at some point. Single women who have never cohabited are excluded from most studies; this has reduced the ability to analyse violence at the hands of current and former boyfriends.
- The age range of those surveyed varies within and between countries. The most common age bracket is women of childbearing age (15 to 49), meaning that girls and older women are usually excluded.
- The reference period used to measure the incidence of the phenomenon is based on whether a violent incident has been experienced either at any time in the past or recently, the latter usually meaning the 6 or 12 months preceding the date of the survey.

2. Substantive contributions

- As far as the incidence of the phenomenon is concerned, studies have fulfilled the useful function of showing public opinion and decision-makers that a high proportion of women are or have been victims of domestic violence. In general, physical violence has been the most frequently measured. Other studies have chosen to consider various types of violence together, given that many women are victims of several kinds of violence at once. It is therefore recognized that psychological violence is the only type that can be inflicted independently, whereas the others are seen in a combination of two or three types occurring simultaneously.

The review of these experiences has also identified the various *determining characteristics associated with violence*:

- It is known that *victims* are found in all socio-economic strata, age groups, levels of education and types of activity. However, a convergence between certain risks factors, such as the fact of having been a victim or witness of violence during childhood, has also been identified.
- Progress has been made in identifying the complexity of the *aggressor profile*, with results that do not always concur in terms of socio-economic groups, individual characteristics or risk factors such as alcohol or drug addiction. A more in-depth debate is therefore necessary in order to accurately define the phenomenon.
- A link (significant association) has been observed between present violence and family background, giving rise to the phenomenon of the *intergenerational reproduction of*

violence. There is also evidence of the negative impact of violence on physical, psychological and sexual health and on women's chances of fully developing as individuals and in terms of interpersonal relationships.

3. Institutional arrangements

In *institutional* terms, a positive trend has emerged whereby almost all the experiences are the result of consultation processes between policy-setting institutions, service providers and development cooperation entities. The methodological and technical aspects of implementation, on the other hand, have been handled by specialized data-collection institutions other than national statistical institutes. Dialogue between users and producers of information emerges as an important element in all the studies.

Below are some of the findings of the surveys reviewed for the present study:

Box 3

SURVEYS REVIEWED

- **Mexico, 1999:** The national survey on family violence found that 88.4% of the men and women surveyed thought that violence was a private matter (INEGI, 1999).
- **Chile, 2001:** The prevalence of psychological violence is similar in all age brackets (15-29, 30-39, 40-49), whereas physical violence in a couple relationship is more likely to happen to women between the ages of 40 and 49 than to younger women. Among non-cohabiting couples, the study showed that the prevalence of psychological violence was 11.4%, while that of physical or sexual violence was 9.7% (Ferrer, 2001).
- **Nicaragua, 1996** 31% of battered women reported having been physically abused during pregnancy. Of that group, a third said that the violence was worse during pregnancy, whereas 40% said that the violence was the same as at other times. Half of them reported having received blows to the belly during their pregnancy (Ellsberg et al; 1996).
- **Nicaragua, 1996:** 80% of battered women said they had never sought any kind of assistance. Only 14% of the women had reported the abuse to the police and less than 6% had visited a health centre or women's shelter (Ellsberg et al; 1996).
- **Peru, 2000:** Out of all the women who had been abused or beaten (46%), less than half of them (42%) had asked someone close to them for help and only one in five (19%) had sought help from an institution (INEI, 2000).
- **Colombia, 1995:** Out of the total number of women who had been beaten by their spouses, 27% had reported the abuse to the authorities. The reasons women gave for not reporting were: believing they could solve the without anybody's help (31%), fear of reprisals (22%) and thinking that their husband would change (17%). Other reasons were fear of being alone (5%) or of not being listened to (5%), or feeling that the problem was not serious enough to report (4%). Only 4.4% did not know it was an offence and 3% said that their town had no authority to which they could report the abuse (Profamilia, 1995).
- **Chile, 2001:** The percentage of women who have experienced couple relationships without violence increases in proportion to their level of education: 40% of women with basic schooling or incomplete secondary schooling have suffered physical violence, compared to 29% of those with complete secondary or higher education (Ferrer, 2001).
- **Nicaragua, 1996:** 41% of women who have no paid employment are victims of serious physical violence, compared to only 10% of those who work outside the home and receive income (Ellsberg et al; 1996).

Box 3 (conclusion)

- **Uruguay, 1997:** 79% of physically abused women were victims or witnesses of child abuse in their families. Among women who did not suffer domestic violence, only 37% reported a history of family violence (Traverso, 2000).
- **Bolivia, 1997:** The fact of having witnessed domestic violence in childhood, experiencing violence in the present and having one's own children who have witnessed family violence were found to be correlated. This seems to imply that such violence gives rise to a vicious circle of socialization that reproduces violent lifestyles (Biehl, n. d.).
- In **Nicaragua**, 50% of violent spouses began the abuse in the first two years, and 80% in the first four years (Biehl, n.d.).
- In **Uruguay**, domestic violence began between the first and third year of marriage in 46% of the cases surveyed (Biehl, n. d.).
- **Chile, 2001:** Violence in couples is present in all socio-economic strata: 39% of women in the upper and upper-middle stratum, 45% in the middle stratum and 59% in the lower and extreme lower stratum suffer from violence (Ferrer, 2001).
- **Chile, 2001:** 42% of women who suffer physical violence report having had some kind of injury. The most common include scratches and bruises (88.5%); cuts, pricks and bites (33.8%); and sprains and dislocations (22%) (Ferrer, 2001).
- **Uruguay:** Comparisons between women who have been victims of severe physical violence and those who do not suffer from violence showed that battered women, in addition to being at high risk of suffering physical injuries, were three times more likely to be seen by specialists in health services, visited emergency wards three times as often, needed five times as many X-rays and were four times more likely to be admitted to hospital than women who did not suffer violence. A comparison between women who suffered sexual violence and those who did not showed that the former used public emergency services eight times more often, needed four times as many X-rays and were almost 10 times more likely to be hospitalized than women who did not suffer such violence (Traverso, 2000, cited in Biehl, n. d.).

B. Administrative records

Below is an analysis of the use of administrative records of public institutions involved in dealing with violence as possible sources of statistical information for the construction of indicators, bearing in mind that this information is often used to formulate policies and programmes.

The analysis is based primarily on the reports produced as part of the *United Nations Inter-Agency Campaign on Women's Human Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean* (1998-1999). When it has not been possible to use these reports, other sources have been analyzed.

It should be pointed out that the information contained in these administrative records is limited to the number, situation and service demands of people who seek help from victim assistance centers. It is therefore impossible to make estimates regarding the entire population.

These records were kept mainly for the purposes of internal management. In their current state, it does not seem feasible to use the information they contain to construct indicators for measuring the incidence and trends of service demand. This can be seen from the following observations resulting from the review of the records concerned:

- *Although many services gather disaggregated information, they do not always present it in this form in their general statistics:*

Box 4

NATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN DATA COLLECTION

- In **Chile**, information on the number of complaints processed at the family violence office of the Santiago Court of Appeal since it was set up in 1998 is not disaggregated by sex. However, an expert opinion (that of the head of the family violence office) is that 95% of the reports received are filed by women.
- In **Brazil**, records of the state-level public safety departments (Secretarias de Segurança Pública) do not include questions resulting in statistical information disaggregated by gender, race or any other variable that would make it possible to establish victim or aggressor profiles.
- In **Bolivia**, data collected by legal services was due to be disaggregated by year, age and gender in 50,000 warrants implemented in the 37 services nationwide. The disaggregation was not, however, carried out owing to a lack of resources.
- In **Ecuador**, complaints of family violence registered in the country's 20 specialized police stations for women and families are processed according to gender.

Source: UNDP (1997); National reports on the situation of gender-based violence against women in Chile, Brazil and Bolivia (<http://www.undp.org/rblac/gender/>); Ecuador, (1999) Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador (SIISE), Technical Secretariat of the Social Front, Ministry of Social Development/ National Women's Council.

- *For the information recorded to be useful for statistical purposes, it must be systematically and consistently transferred to a database and periodically processed, yet this is not a widespread practice in the region:*

Box 5

LACK OF NATIONAL RECORDS

- In **Bolivia**, 67.2% of the institutions surveyed said that they have a data recording and processing system. 29.8% have no such system and 3% did not reply.
- In **Panama**, institutions and organization that deal in some way with cases of gender-based violence generally do have statistical information, but do not process those data.
- **Argentina:** In some cases, institutions record data but do not process them. In many cases, the data are not even entered or filed.
- In the **Dominican Republic**, statistics and other information on family violence and violence against women have been developed qualitatively and quantitatively in both public and private institutions. Furthermore, the Ministry of Women's Affairs is spearheading the design of instruments for compiling information and electronically processing the data collected by the various bodies concerned with the issue.

Source: UNDP (1999); National reports on the situation of gender-based violence against women in Bolivia, Panama and Argentina (<http://www.undp.org/rblac/gender/>); Dominican Republic (2000b), Evaluación de la Aplicación de la Plataforma de Acción de Beijing en la República Dominicana 1995-2000.

- *The use of care protocols is generally regarded as a suitable methodology in procedures for care and referral to other centres and for standardizing the information recorded. However, few initiatives have included the implementation of such protocols.*

NATIONAL EXPERIENCES WITH ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

- In **Argentina**, the clinical histories and files kept by different institutions are in no way comparable, even for the same issue. It is not even possible to compare the same institution's data from year to year because of changes in the collection criteria.
- In **Brazil**, the compilation of statistical tables by the state-level public safety departments (Secretarias de Segurança Pública) is hampered by the fact that there is no single national model for recording complaints. The inconsistent methodology for producing such instruments therefore makes it difficult to compile data at national level or to make comparisons between states.
- In **Nicaragua**, the records system is very diverse throughout the various State bodies and civil society organizations that deal with victims of violence. Often there is no record of the care provided or, where record does exist, they do not reflect the magnitude of the problem or the way in which it was dealt with.
- In **Costa Rica**, the need to set up an efficient system for recording cases of violence has become increasingly apparent. As part of the National Programme for Addressing and Preventing Family Violence (PLANOVI), significant progress was made in terms of recording cases of family violence, including:
 - Development of a research study on family violence recording and referencing systems;
 - Pilot application by the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS) of a registration form to record and monitor health in the context of comprehensive care models for family violence in Goicoechea and San Ramón;
 - Design of a single system for recording cases of family violence in San Ramón;
 - Mandatory recording of cases of family violence in the health care system;
 - Starting in 1997, recording of requests for protection orders in the judiciary's statistical system.
- In **Guatemala** (1997-1998), efforts were made to standardize a registration form to record cases of violence against women. Hospitals, the public prosecutor's office, the courts, the National Police and other institutions have since been encouraged to use that form to record cases of violence against women.
- In **Bolivia**, there is no standardized system for recording information. Only 6% of the institutions surveyed mentioned a type of standardized form (form R1), whereas 77% reported using different types of records (complaint forms, logbooks, records of summonses, welfare files, etc.). A smaller number of institutions even referred to legal petitions, forensic certificates and other documents that cannot be considered records systems; these institutions even seem to be uncertain about what constitutes a records system. Lastly, 3% of the institutions stated that they kept no records of any kind and 17.9% were unable to answer the question.
- In **Peru**, the conduct of interviews, text analysis and research into complaints in official records and on form PER-VG/99 showed that the main problem was the deficient systematization of collected data, which therefore become limited and relatively meaningless. This is due basically to the lack of standardized registration procedures. There are no suitable registration procedures or standards and no single protocol.

preparation for the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

- *Information is dispersed and is not subject to standardized collection procedures or inter-institutional cross-checking. Furthermore, there is no suitable institution to consolidate the information.*

Box 7

LACK OF DATA COMPARABILITY

- In **Chile**, the National Statistical Institute combines information provided by the uniformed police (*Carabineros*), the investigative police and the courts. However, the information is not recorded using the same criteria, making it difficult to achieve an overall view. It is important to devise a single recording system and to designate an entity to centralize the information in order to have access to comparable data that may be used to formulate strategies and guidelines to combat the problem.
- In **Uruguay**, the data recorded by the Ministry of the Interior have in the past been incomplete. However, the changes to be made in the computerized system from 2000 onward should result in the systematic, standardized and centralized recording of reported cases of family violence.
- In **Panama**, there is no system for standardizing the statistical records of private organizations that deal with gender violence. The dispersion of data and the lack of standardized indicators make it impossible to analyse the information.

Source: UNDP (1999); *National reports on the situation of gender-based violence against women in Chile, Uruguay and Panama* (<http://www.undp.org/rblac/gender/>)

- *Police and legal records have been the main source of statistical information from administrative records. Changes in the number of complaints in different years have been the most commonly used indicator.*

Table 3

MEASURING VIOLENCE ON THE BASIS OF POLICE AND LEGAL RECORDS

Country	Measurement	Incidence		
Argentina	Percentage of cases of violence against women dealt with by the victim orientation centre of the federal police Percentage of complaints filed by women with the civil courts of Buenos Aires	The victims were women in 85% of the 3,900 cases processed between 1994 and 1998. 76.65% of the complaints received in 1999 were made by women		
Bolivia	Number of cases addressed by the family protection brigades in 1997 and 1998	Violence	1997	1998
		Physical	12098	13174
		Psychological	7783	8538
		Sexual	45	172
		P, Psy + S	462	5351
	Total acts of aggression	20388	27235	
Chile	Number of complaints in a calendar year and percentage of potential demand	Year	Complaints	% potential demand
		1995	38,200	6.9
		1996	58,322	10.6
		1997	61,015	11.0
		According to records of the <i>Carabineros</i> , 94% of complaints are made by women		
Colombia	Number of cases of domestic violence registered in judicial offices	In 1997, there were 58,044 reports of family violence and 81% of the victims were women; the problem was most common among women between the ages of 25 and 34.		

Table 3 (conclusion)

Country	Measurement	Incidence			
Costa Rica	Number of cases of domestic violence registered in judicial offices	Between July 1996 and June 1999, the number of requests for protection orders rose steadily in response to the entry into force of the Domestic Violence Act, with an additional 5,000 requests being filed each year. The total number of cases for 1999 was expected to be about 26,000, with an average of 2,150 complaints per month			
Ecuador	Number of women who have filed complaints with the specialized police station for women and families	About 95% of all complaints concerning family violence were made by battered women (as of late 1999)			
Guatemala	Number of complaints received by the Office for the Defense of Women of the Office of the Human Rights Procurator	In 1999, a total of 405 complaints were made by women in the following age groups:			
		25 and under	22.71%		
		26 - 45	56.3%		
		45 +	20.99%		
Mexico	Sex distribution of complaints of family violence. Age and sex distribution (in absolute and relative terms) of victims of sexual offences (January-September 1997)	Type of violence	No. of cases	% Men	% Women
		Family Violence	6,954	14.38	85.62
		Sexual offences	3,186	14.34	85.66
Peru	Sex and age distribution of complainants in proceedings recorded in a calendar year (1997)	Metropolitan Lima: Complaints of violence against women	Year	No. of cases	
			1996	8,192	
			1997	24,576	
			1998	27,935	
Uruguay	Sex and age distribution of complainants in proceedings recorded in a calendar year (1997)	Complainants	% Women	% Men	
		Total	97	3	
		Under 18	0	6	
		18 - 29	38	23	
		30 - 50	50	48	
		50 +	12	23	
Venezuela	Number of people who have appeared before the Technical Judicial Police division on violence against women and the family since it was set up (27 January 1999 to 20 January 2000), not disaggregated by sex	No. of people appearing before the Division	4,445		
		Legal proceedings brought	1,165		
		Provisional arrest for 72 hours	92		

Source: Argentina (2000), *Mujeres en Argentina. Estado de situación a cinco años de Beijing*, Buenos Aires, Women's Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship; Bolivia (2000), *Informe 2000. Cinco años después de Beijing: Poder, oportunidad y auto-determinación para las mujeres en el nuevo siglo*, La Paz, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Planning, Office of the Deputy Minister for Gender, Generational and Family Affairs; Ecuador (1999), *Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador (SIISE)*, Technical Secretariat of the Social Front, Ministry of Social Development/ National Women's Council, Quito (CD-ROM); Mexico (2000a), *Sistema de Indicadores para el Seguimiento de la Situación de la Mujer en México (SISESIM)*, National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) (CD-ROM); Peru (1999), *Género: Equidad y disparidad: Una revisión en la antesala del nuevo milenio*, Lima, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Human Development (PROMUDEH)/ UNFPA/ National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI); Venezuela (2000), *Situación de la mujer en Venezuela (1995-2000)*, Ministry of Health and Social Development/ National Women's Council; national reports submitted by countries in response to the questionnaire sent out by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women in 1999; and periodic reports submitted by countries under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Below is a summary of the main problems detected with regard to information from administrative records. It should be borne in mind that the list of problems is based on assessment summaries submitted by countries and that no more precise information is available on the complex national circumstances with respect to the organization of the various services and their particular procedures for collecting information.

- The reference population is limited to those people who have required or requested some type of care. It is therefore impossible to make extrapolations or inferences concerning the incidence of violence in the population as a whole.
- The characteristics observed in battered women who did receive care are not representative of all women who should receive it, since those who seek help may have individual idiosyncrasies or motivations that do not necessarily apply to all women who are victims of violence. Also, the availability, coverage and perceived quality of care centres may limit access by some segments of the female population.
- The lack of detection methodologies and care protocols in services that deal with victims of violence results in the under reporting of information on violence against women.
- The differing levels of information which include the relevant services in their client records -the number of women actually assisted, the number of individual visits and the number of services received on each occasion, for example- make it difficult to interpret the data on a basis of comparability.
- Owing to the lack of uniform criteria for recording information, services work with different concepts of physical, sexual and psychological violence.
- This makes it impossible to gauge the real relative scope of each type.
- The lack of an integrated information system makes it difficult to know how many times the same women have sought care, which kind of care was received, who provided it, where and when it was provided and whether such visits were associated with the same act of violence or the same aggressor. This makes it impossible to trace either the history of violence affecting each woman who seeks help or the assistance that was actually received.

III. Proposed indicators

A. Description of indicators

Indicators are comparative measures adopted by convention that come into general use as a result of a social and/or political conviction that they are useful for studying changes in the object of analysis. Despite the aim of objectivity, it is therefore important to recognize that an indicator must be based not only on rigorous calculation but also on the belief and confidence of users (including public opinion) in the indicator's capacity to measure its particular object.

Indicators are the outcome of analyses combining qualitative and quantitative methods that support the idea that an item of information represents a given situation reasonably well. A good indicator must be based on a clear and precise question. Indicators are often constructed without regard to the policies they are intended to assess, which is a problem in itself. Indicators are not precise measurements and, although they should speak for themselves (and the more expressive they are, the more useful), they must be interpreted in a given context.

A basic requirement of indicators used in decision-making is that they should provide information on the evolution of the problem over time. The definition of the indicator therefore needs to be maintained to ensure comparability over time and between countries when comparisons are to be made at the subregional or regional level. Indicators do not postulate a strict causal relationship between the measures proposed and the results achieved, meaning that what they gauge is not necessarily so much the consequences of policies as the development of the situation. For this relationship to be ascertained, specific studies and research must be carried out.

The best way of ensuring comparability is to use well-known and established indicators or standardized information sources such as censuses and surveys, vital statistics and education statistics, among others. This increases the likelihood that indicators will be calculated in the same way over time and between countries. The implicit follow-up period for a given situation is at least annual, and for this reason it is recommended that surveys be used in preference to censuses, which leave excessively long periods without new information. Measurements that may represent temporary circumstances should be avoided.

Gender indicators are used to measure changes in gender relations. Like all comparative measures, indicators may be used to compare similar objects or situations at the same point in time or the same object over a period of time.

Wherever possible and relevant, the construction or adoption of indicators should include separate calculations for men and women. Gender indicators depict not the level for one sex or the other, but the gap or difference between them. The situation of women in each country is best measured by comparison with, and is not independent of, that of men in the same country. The aim is to identify optimum situations in numerical terms: in other words, to determine the values at which the indicators would stand in an ideal situation, stipulating their limits of variation, so that it is enough to know the value of an indicator to gauge how close a given country is to achieving a situation of equality between men and women.

Quantitative indicators are usually expressed in relative terms such as *rates*, *percentages* or *gaps* in order to establish a basis for comparison over time, given that the values used in the calculations may vary significantly from one period to another. Such formulations offer a clear and concise picture of the degree of inequity or vulnerability of the subject population within a known range of values. In contrast, the use of indicators expressed in absolute values is less common because these indicators are harder to contextualize in relation to other population parameters that directly affect the interpretation of the scope and incidence of the problem.

Over the years, some social indicators have acquired academic, technical and political status and have been widely used to measure progress. These include indicators of maternal mortality and female literacy. More recent is the inclusion in policy debates of indicators designed to measure new problems linked to gender equality. One such emerging issue is violence against women, which is gaining ground and is a subject of much discussion. This document is intended to contribute to that process. In order for technically constructed indicators to acquire credibility, they must be based on analyses that reflect the complexity of the phenomena analysed and that make it possible to derive relatively simple formulas from this complexity in order to facilitate our understanding of the problems concerned.

The most basic distinction is between *quantitative* and *qualitative* indicators. The present document does not propose qualitative indicators, but focuses instead on suggesting quantitative measures that have relative values for men and women and that provide answers to some of the most common questions that arise in the formulation of public policies.

While quantitative indicators should be as self-sufficient as possible (i.e., should speak for themselves), that is clearly an aim that must be pursued by strengthening capacities for analysis and interpretation. Apart from the above-mentioned contextualization, it is also vital to consider the indicators' underlying approaches and theoretical and methodological premises. Quantitative indicators should therefore be complemented with qualitative studies.

The questions behind indicators are the reflection of a certain stage of knowledge. In many countries, the initial interest was in knowing how many battered women there were: that single piece of information on the number of women who reported acts of violence was an indicator of major cultural and social changes. Subsequent questions arose concerning the characteristics of aggressors, victims and conditioning factors as the debate intensified and gained legitimacy on the public agenda. In that sense, the increase in the number of complaints could be seen as positive at one time, given that analysts felt it revealed society's willingness to break the silence. At another stage in the process, the increase in the number of complaints can be seen as negative and as implying that policies are ineffective, services are insufficient or some other explanatory factor is present. In addition to comparing and signaling increases/decreases within a situation, indicators should interpret them in a manner, which though subjective, is based on a consensus concerning the validity of a given explanation.

The process of formulating questions and defining indicators should be the result of shared common sense, a minimum degree of affinity between approaches and a clear vision of the problem to be measured. One of the advantages of quantitative data is that they can be standardized; hence the importance of establishing which questions are to be asked.

One way to classify indicators is to distinguish between result indicators, input indicators and access indicators. Those proposed in the present document are *result indicators*, in that they are designed to measure the incidence of violence in its various forms (physical, sexual and psychological), which is the result of a set of factors that are *not* dealt with in the present proposal.

Also included are indicators of incidence associated with characteristics of the target population's geographical, family and individual context. These characteristics have been documented as possible risk or protection factors in various studies.

B. Objectives and rationale of the proposal

Developing a system of indicators for a new and statistically complex issue such as violence against women must necessarily be seen as a medium- and long-term process. At these initial stages, indicators should provide information on questions that are considered fundamental so that they can later be expanded upon according to the information needed to formulate policies.

The proposal presented in this document is an attempt to respond to some of the main problems encountered in decision-making processes regarding policies to combat violence against women. The following factors have been taken into account for that purpose:

- The need for quantitative information to help *raise awareness* among authorities;
- The need for quantitative information to *formulate national plans* to combat violence;
- The need for quantitative information for adequate *monitoring* of policies;
- The need for quantitative information in order to be *accountable* to civil society;
- The need for information to be *comparable* and *periodic* at the regional level;
- The *institutional and budgetary constraints* of the institutions responsible for collecting, processing and analysing the information;

- The need to *distinguish between the demand for information for use in public policy-making*, which requires summary indicators with a minimum level of disaggregation, and the demand for information that contributes to knowledge and research on all aspects of the phenomenon and on more specific risk groups (girls, older women, displaced women), which requires a wider supply of information with greater levels of disaggregation;
- The need to *assimilate the methodological recommendations* that emerge from the experiences analysed.

In this sense, the present proposal aims to strike a balance between what is ideal and what is possible by attempting to complement efforts already under way while incorporating characteristics, purposes and objectives that go beyond the bare minimum. The fact that the proposal seeks to obtain region-wide information through a commitment undertaken by all the countries is intended to facilitate, rather than exclude, the conduct of supplementary studies.

As stated above, the first step should therefore be to make efforts at the conceptual level to summarize the complexity of the problem in a minimum set of suitable indicators. These indicators must be useful for the purposes of including the issue on the public agenda, designing and following up public policies and meeting accountability obligations to civil society. The indicators should be periodically calculated and should take into account the actual capacities of statistics producers within the framework of national statistical systems.

C. Indicators based on survey information

1. Conceptual and methodological considerations

(a) Definition of the problem

The concept of violence against women covers the various forms of physical, sexual and psychological violence, regardless of where or by whom it is perpetrated. For the purposes of this proposal, the specific form of violence selected is that *perpetrated by an intimate partner*. This document does not seek to measure other forms of gender violence which, although they are included in the Convention of Belém do Pará, affect women in areas that are classified as offences in penal codes or are perpetrated in the public sphere. The sole purpose of this decision is to propose a methodological model to illustrate the problems and limitations encountered in measuring violence against women and to show how they might hamper the formulation of indicators.

The definition of the problem must reflect the fact that various types of violence can occur simultaneously. However, specifying the problem for the purposes of measuring it must include defining the acts that make up each type or form of violence. Studies carried out in different countries of the region have applied classifications at various levels of aggregation, making it difficult to compare results. To increase the homogeneity and comparability of the information collected, there is a need to work towards a standardized and, preferably, internationally validated classification. A clear and detailed classification would also make it possible to measure the problem more reliably, since victims would be able to recognize actions that are regarded as violence but that they had not perceived as such. Also, for those responsible for recording information, a predefined classification would facilitate the standardized codification of acts of violence.

(b) The questions behind the proposed indicators

The main question behind the proposed indicators concerns the incidence of violence in its physical, sexual and psychological manifestations. Another set of questions is aimed at verifying whether the factors identified as risk or protection factors are valid; i.e. whether the incidence of the problem is significantly different in the subsets selected. These include geographical location, socio-economic situation and the individual characteristics of the target population of the study.

(c) Target population

The definition of the problem limits the target population to all women who have or have had some kind of intimate partner, such as spouses, former spouses, current or former common-law spouses, boyfriends or ex-boyfriends. The age bracket selected is 15 to 65, although the upper and lower age limits may be extended according to national requirements.

(d) Geographical coverage

Considering the vast differences between the region's urban and rural contexts, it is advisable to use samples that are representative of urban and rural areas. This would result in specific measurements that will contribute to a better understanding of the problem. However, owing to the sample size required and the high costs involved in obtaining such representative results, decisions on this point should be taken by assessing the possibility of selecting samples of population subsets whose results could be used as a basis for deducing the incidence of the problem in each area.

(e) Reference period

To measure the extent of the problem, it is necessary to define a reference period. Considering that indicators are aimed at ascertaining the impact of decisions that have affected women in more recent periods of their lives, and given the frequency with which violent acts occur as part of the so-called "cycle of violence", the past year is established as the period that offers the most accurate view of the problem. This does not mean that studies should not include questions on longer periods, such as a person's entire lifetime, since this information can be useful for other purposes.

(f) Source of information

As mentioned in the previous section, surveys are the only source that makes it possible to grasp the real dimensions of the problem. The exact type of survey to be used (a specific stand-alone survey versus the inclusion of a special section in another survey) is a matter to be decided in the light of the costs of each alternative. Although the option selected may vary from country to country, it is nonetheless vital to ensure that the information collected can be used to construct comparable indicators.

(g) Questionnaires

One of the methodological considerations to be taken into account is the scope of the questionnaires, in the sense that a questionnaire dealing with many aspects of the phenomenon requires a longer interview. This tends to affect the quality of the data collected in the field, resulting in higher rates of rejection and "non-answers".

Extremely long questionnaires may also endanger the safety of survey respondents. Since the interview must be conducted without the presence of other family members, the victim may feel too uncomfortable (for fear that the aggressor or another person may come home or find out) to continue the survey or may systematically reply that she has *not* suffered violence in order to finish the interview more quickly.

(h) Victim safety and ethical considerations

The nature of the issue makes it an extremely difficult problem to approach: the fact that it is such an intimate problem for victims and the risk to which they may be exposed before, during or after the interview (if the aggressor appears or finds out) may give rise to other violent episodes whose consequences are impossible to predict.

The provisions made and strategies applied to protect the safety of the women surveyed should consider the most appropriate type of interview and define the profile of the most suitable interviewer to carry out the survey.

Informed consent is an appropriate technique used prior to the interview. It provides the potential interviewee with information on the level of confidentiality and the nature of the questions so that she can assess the situation and agree or refuse to be interviewed.

Also, instructions to interviewing staff about how and when to stop an interview should be clearly spelled out and should form a basic part of the training.

Below is a set of minimum indicators based on the above-mentioned methodological aspects and other technical considerations not included here. The indicators are intended to serve as guidelines for countries of the region and to help them to achieve more precision in devising public policies and preparing their follow-up.

2. Proposed indicators

(a) Indicators of incidence

The relative incidence of violence serves as a basis for debating the need for specific laws and policies. Measuring the specific forms of violence is important for designing prevention, care and training programmes, since it provides information on the types of services and the quality of human resources that are required, as well as the target population and the problem areas that arise.

Differentials in the incidence of violence (according to the variables selected) make it possible to target preventive measures at those groups of women at highest risk. Differentials can also be used to identify the characteristics of victims who are potential service users, so that the supply of such services can be adapted to those characteristics.

Indicator	Calculation formula
Rate of violence	Number of women aged 15 to 65 who have been victims of any form of violence (physical, sexual or psychological) at the hands of an intimate partner in the past year, divided by the total number of women in that age group and then multiplied by 100.
Rate of physical violence	Number of women aged 15 to 65 who have been victims of physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner in the past year, divided by the total number of women in that age group and then multiplied by 100.
Rate of psychological violence	Number of women aged 15 to 65 who have been victims of psychological violence at the hands of an intimate partner in the past year, divided by the total number of women in that age group and then multiplied by 100.
Rate of sexual violence	Number of women aged 15 to 65 who have been victims of sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner in the past year, divided by the total number of women in that age group and then multiplied by 100.
Rate of unreported violence	Number of women aged 15 to 65 who have been victims of physical, sexual or psychological violence in the past year but have not reported it, divided by the total number of women in that age group and then multiplied by 100.

(b) Indicators of incidence by type of violence, disaggregated according to selected characteristics

All the indicators proposed in this area are aimed at measuring incidence per type of violence in different geographical and households contexts, and in accordance with individual characteristics of the target population.²³ They should therefore be calculated using the same formula as for the indicators of incidence specified above.

Geographical area

Rate of urban violence

Rate of rural violence

Poverty status of households

Rate of violence in poor households

Rate of violence in non-poor households

Age of women

Rates of violence by age group: 15-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-65

Activity Status

Rate of violence among women with paid employment (by type of violence)

Rate of violence among women exclusively engaged in household chores

Level of education

Rate of violence by level of education: no education, primary, secondary, higher

Pregnancy Status

Rate of violence among pregnant women

Rate of violence among non-pregnant women

Racial and ethnic group

Rate of violence among women by racial or ethnic group

Relationship with aggressor

Rate of violence among women married to aggressor

Rate of violence among women living with aggressor

Rate of violence among women separated from aggressor

D. Indicators based on information from administrative records

1. Conceptual and methodological considerations

As explained in section II, the current state of information from administrative records presents multiple problems that limit the possibility of obtaining statistically valid indicators in the short term.

In order to ensure that the information is statistically reliable, the various care services should implement a series of actions aimed at improving the procedures and methodologies used in various phases of information collection, validation, processing and analysis. Moreover, these processes should be supported by cross-sectoral coordination and consensus to ensure that the information meets the levels of standardization, comparability and coverage required for establishing indicators.

The main recommendations resulting from the examination of the problems of using information from administrative records include both the need to standardize the criteria for registering information and the need for an information system that prevents the data from being

²³ The participants in the working group on surveys 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) suggested the inclusion of additional indicators linked to the following characteristics of women who were victims of violence: (a) percentage contribution to family income; (b) involvement in community-based organizations; (c) experience of violence in childhood; (d) parents' experience of domestic violence; and (e) ownership or tenancy of residence.

dispersed, omitted and/or duplicated. Below are some of the points to be considered in designing an information system that can be used to formulate statistically reliable indicators:

(a) *Registration form*: Including a number of variables that are common to the records of all service providers in the region would help to ensure that the relevant information is available for calculating indicators and standardizing definitions and concepts.

- *Common and relevant information* should be considered to include all information that is useful for correctly identifying victims and aggressors (identification number, name, sex, age, address, relationship between victim and aggressor). Information on the type of violence inflicted, which should be classified as physical and/or sexual and/or psychological, should also be included along with the date, time and place of the incident and information on the presence of witnesses. The following information concerning care services should also be included: date, place and time of care; reason why victim came for advice or requested/needed care; type of care provided and its result; and referral to other services.
- In order for the information collected to be comparable, it is vital for services to reach a *consensus on classifying and defining* assaults as to which type of violence they represent: physical, sexual or psychological. It is also necessary to standardize the codification of possible answers to questions on each variable to ensure standardization and comparability from the time the data are entered in the form.

(b) *Integrated information system*: In order to obtain indicators that are representative of all women who receive care as a result of violence, it is necessary to consolidate all the information in one place to create an integrated information system to characterize both the current and future situation of care services and the victims who have used them.

- In order to obtain the appropriate *information coverage on care services*, the system must have the capacity to maintain an up-to-date registry of all centres that provide some kind of service to women who have been victims of violence, including: identification of service, type(s) of care provided, care capacity in terms of number of people, number of women looked after, geographical location, geographical coverage and female population of that area, date the centre became operational, availability of the single form for recording information, whether or not the centre enters information into the system and, if so, date the center began to do so, plus any other relevant information.
- To obtain *all information on victims*, it is necessary to supply the system with the data provided by the single form from all care centres. Linking databases would make it possible to connect services and victims at different times and locations and possible to know the reasons for the visit, the number of times the women had requested/received care, information on the aggressor, the type of care received and its results.
- Lastly, the *quality and reliability of the information* generated by the integrated information system will depend on the methodological procedures used at all stages of the collection, processing, results presentation and timely circulation of information. For these reasons, the system should have, at a minimum, the capacity to:
 - *Standardize definitions and concepts* among the different service providers.
 - *Provide technical guidelines* clearly defining the content, means and computational procedures for recording data.
 - *Establish deadlines* for compiling information.
 - *Interpret the information requirements* of the various users.

- *Share information* as part of a continuous process of feedback and exchange between users and providers.
- Ensure that the information is *relevant and periodically updated*.
- Include in the results *all relevant technical and methodological notes*.
- Publish and *circulate statistics and indicators* in print and magnetic form and on the Internet.

(c) *Calculating indicators*: Indicators based on administrative records measure the demand met by services that deal with women victims of violence. If the indicator shows an increase in demand between two consecutive periods, this may be attributable to an increase in the supply of services available to victims, all other relevant parameters being equal. These include:

- *Geographical coverage*: Indicators should be calculated for the same geographical areas in all periods.
- *Reference period*: The recommended reference period for calculating indicators is the 12 months immediately preceding a predefined date.
- *Institutional sector*: Indicators should be calculated separately for each institutional sector that provides some type of care to victims, such as police, legal, social assistance, health and education services.
- *Unit of information*: The unit of information that should be used corresponds to women who receive services at care centres and who suffer violence at the hands of an intimate partner (spouse, former spouse, current or former common-law spouse, current or former boyfriend/companion).

2. Proposed indicators

The table below presents four indicators for estimating the incidence of the demand being met by care services.

Indicator	Calculation formula
Rate of demand for care	Number of women who have received services in relation to violence at the hands of an intimate partner in the past year, divided by the total female population and then multiplied by 1000.
Rate of demand for care in relation to physical violence	Number of women who have received services in relation to physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner in the past year, divided by the total female population and then multiplied by 1000.
Rate of demand for care in relation to sexual violence	Number of women who have received services in relation to sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner in the past year, divided by the total female population and then multiplied by 1000.
Rate of demand for care in relation to psychological violence	Number of women who have received services in relation to psychological violence at the hands of an intimate partner in the past year, divided by the total female population and then multiplied by 1000.

E. Institutional arrangements

A set of indicators to measure violence cannot be implemented without considering national processes to institutionalize public policies with a gender perspective. These policies should be set in the context of political decisions aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination and should be supported by high-level public policy-making bodies, together with:

- Democratic and participatory institutional networks that involve all stakeholders interested in eliminating discrimination;
- Cross-sectoral and inter-institutional agreements;
- Development of the analytical and methodological capacities of information producers and users;
- Inclusive social networks that enable women to express their views in the policy-making process;
- Accountability on the part of public entities.

It is from this point of view that indicators should be part of a strategy to institutionalize the gender perspective on the basis of a dialogue between producers and users of information. This dialogue and consultation process should be accompanied by a recognition of the specific roles played by institutions. In this sense, it is important to strengthen the role of national statistical offices and national women's offices in the formulation of public policies. These two pillars should not exclude sectoral stakeholders or civil society, but should seek ways of linking social demand with policy objectives.

Lastly, access to information on violence against women should be understood as access to a public good that exist for the benefit of society at large. Institutional arrangements that encourage technical thoroughness and efficiency, as well as civic control, are the only possible framework in which such tools can be used to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women in an appropriate and timely way.

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