

HRC7: Item 3: Interactive Dialogue Violence against Women

New Zealand and Canada, 13 March 2008

I have the honour to make this intervention on behalf of Canada and New Zealand. Our delegations attach great importance to the advancement and implementation of the rights of women and girls internationally.

Violence against women and girls remains one of the most serious, widespread and ongoing violations of human rights around the world. It is also perhaps the most under-reported and undocumented. Violence against women breeds in a culture of silence. It is the duty of this Council to break that silence.

The first priority must be supporting the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its causes and consequences. The work of the Special Rapporteur, Dr Yakin Erturk, has been an essential contribution to international efforts to promote the rights of women and girls and eradicate violence against them. Canada and New Zealand welcome Dr. Erturk's report which focuses on indicators on violence against women and state responses to eliminating this violence.

Successful implementation of human rights begins with an accurate understanding of the problem. In this regard, we draw your attention to the urgent need, highlighted by Dr Erturk, for a comprehensive and systematic collection and analysis of data on the scope and extent of gender-based violence. Such data provides the essential knowledge base on which we can all build effective policies and practices to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls.

Furthermore, Dr Erturk's report provides an invaluable resource in support of the establishment of an international consensus on indicators. Canada and New Zealand, fully support the continuing and ongoing efforts by the UN system to develop indicators on violence against women, so as to enable more targeted and comprehensive data on the scope and extent of gender-based violence, which could in turn improve the effectiveness of State responses to such violence. We call upon UN bodies and the Special Rapporteur to coordinate effectively over the next year and to progress this important work.

Violence against women statistics often fail to address adequately the diversity of women and girls. If governments are to fully understand the situation of different groups of women and girls, and to respond effectively, we believe it is important to further disaggregate data by other factors.

Dr Erturk, what steps could be taken to ensure that statistics and indicators fully take into account the diversity of women, in particular, women with disabilities, indigenous women, refugee and migrant women, older women and women in poverty?