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## **Establishment and activities by the Platform of independent UN and regional expert mechanisms on elimination of discrimination and violence against women – EDVAW Platform**

The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (SRVAW) started this initiative in 2017 to promote thematic and institutional cooperation between the UN and regional expert mechanisms on the elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girls with the view of accelerating domestication of international and regional standards, achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.

### **The EDVAW Platform is composed by:**

- UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW)
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls (WGDVAW)
- Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI)
- Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)
- African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa (A SRWHR)
- Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Rapporteur on the Rights of Women (IA RWHR)

### **Overview of activities aimed at the establishment of close thematic cooperation and the EDVAW Platform (2017 -2020)**

#### **2017**

##### **I. Initial meetings in 2017 during the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) session:**

1. UN SRVAW organized the panel “**A journey to strengthen cooperation between the international and regional mechanisms on women's rights**”, 61<sup>st</sup> session of the **Commission on the Status of Women**, March 2017 ([flyer](#))



The panel discussed the strengths and weakness of existing regional frameworks on women's rights and elaborated strategies to strengthen cooperation between global and regional mechanisms. Participants in the panel: Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights; Dubravka Simonovic, UN Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); Dalia Leinarte, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Frances Raday, Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice (WGDAW); Lucy Asuagbor, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa (A SRWHR); Rosa Celorio, on behalf of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Rapporteur on the Rights of Women (IA RWHR); Lily Purba, ASEAN Commission on women and children; Marja Ruotanen, Council of Europe; and representative of the State of Belgium.

## 2. Meeting with the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, during the CSW, March 2017

The first meeting of the EDVAW Platform and the UN Secretary-General **Antonio Guterres** was held in March 2017. During the meeting, the Secretary-General expressed his support for greater cooperation between the UN and regional mechanisms on women's rights, and stated he was ready to support any form of institutionalization of this cooperation between United Nations and regional mechanisms on women's rights, with the support of UN Women, OHCHR and relevant UN agencies. He also mentioned the UN would look into effective mechanisms for mainstreaming norms and standards on women's rights within the UN system and establish a formal relationship with the mechanisms for some common initiatives.



At the meeting with the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, were: Dubravka Simonovic, Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); Dalia Leinarte, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Frances Raday, Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice (WGDAW); Luz Patricia Mejia Guerrero, on behalf of the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Feride Acar, President of Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO); and OHCHR staff.

## II. Organization of American States - OAS

A Regional Panel and meetings were organized by the MESECVI at the Organization of American States (OAS), Washington, DC, in November 2017.

3. MESECVI, at the Organization of American States, organized the **Panel** “Regional and International Mechanisms for an integral approach to violence against women and girls”, in Washington, DC in November 2017 ([concept note](#) and [video](#))



At the panel, Sylvia Mesa, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Dubravka Simonovic, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); Feride Acar, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO); Paulo Abrão, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; and Jennifer Loten, Ambassador of Canada to the OAS.

4. **Meeting** with the **Secretary-General** of the Organization of American States, Luis Almagro, in Washington, DC, USA, November 2017



The EDVAW experts meet with the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, Luis Almagro, and discussed the need for and advantages of close thematic cooperation between independent UN and regional expert mechanisms. The Secretary-General expressed his support to these ideas and readiness to support this new effort for thematic cooperation on women rights.

Participants: Luis Almagro, Secretary-General of the Organization of American States; Dubravka Simonovic, Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); Sylvia Mesa, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Feride Acar, Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO); and supporting staff.

### **III. Joint Statements as an effort to speak with one voice on issues of joint concern**

5. Joint statement by independent UN and regional women’s human rights mechanisms on the consideration of Sustainable Development Goal 5 by the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (July 2017) ([statement](#)):

Joint statement on the consideration of Sustainable Development Goal 5 by the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development called for the HLPF review process to “draw on the States’ reporting processes from the CEDAW Committee, GREVIO, MESECVI and the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, the country visit and thematic reports of the SRVAW, WGDW, and the African and Inter-American rapporteurs, as well as mechanisms’ concluding observations, recommendations and decisions.” The mechanisms highlighted that “...these evaluations already consider many of the elements of SDG 5 and its targets as well as the other SDGs while the global UN and regional mechanisms, as already established organs of accountability for women's human rights and empowerment, stand ready not only to monitor progress but also to give guidance and to provide context specific roadmaps to States and other stakeholders in implementing Goal 5 and all of its targets and other related SDGs, and stand ready to participate in this SDG review process as independent women's human rights review mechanisms.”

Participating expert mechanisms: The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee); the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); the UN Working Group on the elimination of discrimination against women in law and practice (WGDAW); the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' Rapporteur on the rights of women.

**2018**

**IV. At the 62<sup>nd</sup> CSW, the Platform is officially launched as a SRVAW initiative and project supported by the governments of Switzerland, Republic of Korea and Spain and administrated by OHCHR:**

6. The first official meeting of the EDVAW Platform was organized as the "Consultation between Global and Regional Mechanisms on Violence and Discrimination against Women", and held during the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women, March 2018 ([agenda](#))

The event, convened by Dubravka Simonovic, Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW), brought together the following participants: Dalia Lenairte, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Feride Acar, Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of the Council of Europe (GREVIO); Sylvia Mesa, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Soyata Maiga, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR); Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Women of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IA SWHR); Elizabeth Broderick, UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice (WGDAW).

During this first official meeting, the members focused on strategies for developing linkages and cooperation between global and regional independent mechanisms on women's rights and gender based violence against women, with the aim of institutionalising this cooperation at the UN and regional levels. The participants also discussed ways in which the different mechanisms could address current priorities and upcoming issues through the Platform, by developing harmonized positions, practices and guidelines aimed at ending violence against women and develop a joint work plan on thematic cooperation.

7. SRVAW organized a High-Level Panel on "Strengthening Cooperation between Global and Regional Independent Mechanisms dealing with Violence and Discrimination against Women", 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women, March 2018 ([flyer](#) and [concept note](#))



Participants: Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General; Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women Executive Director, Dubravka Simonovic, Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); Dalia Leinarte, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Elizabeth Broderick, Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice (WGDAW); Sylvia Mesa, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Feride Acar, Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO); Soyata Maiga, African Commission on Human Rights on behalf of Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa (A SRWHR); Margarete May Macaulay, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Rapporteur on the Rights of Women (IA RWHR).



Deputy Secretary-General **Amina Mohammed** opened the High-Level Panel on Strengthened Cooperation between Global and Regional Independent Mechanisms Dealing with Violence and Discrimination against Women by stating: “I am particularly pleased to see this initiative working towards enhanced and institutionalized cooperation in the field of women’s human rights and in ending violence against women. There is a growing global backlash against women’s rights that we see replicated in country after country in ways that are all too familiar”...” But because of this shared struggle, we women have long been accustomed to building cross-border movements and calling on the solidarity of our sisters around the world. Harmonizing international and regional standards and processes can make our mechanisms more effective and bring human rights closer to lived realities. Sharing knowledge and experiences can expand opportunities and strengthen the quality of programmes, leading to better outcomes for women and girls. **And, by speaking with a unified voice, regional and international mechanisms can magnify their visibility and moral authority to the benefit of the women they seek to serve and the rights they seek to enforce.**”... “And so, I heartily welcome this initiative from the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women to strengthen the cooperation between international and regional mechanisms dealing with violence against women and women’s rights, and would like to emphasize the Secretary-General’s and my support” ([read her full remarks here](#)).

8. Second meeting of the EDVAW expert mechanisms with UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, in March 2018.





At the meeting: UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres; Dubravka Simonovic, Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); Dalia Leinarte, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Melissa Upreti, UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice (WGDAP); Sylvia Mesa, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Feride Acar, Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO); Soyata Maiga, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR); Margarette May Macaulay, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Rapporteur on the Rights of Women (IA SWHR).

**9. SRVAW Expert Group Meeting on violence against women in politics** at the headquarters of UN Women, March 2018 ([news release](#) and [meeting report](#)) that resulted in the **SRVAW Report on Violence against women in politics** ([A/73/301](#))

The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Women, and in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), co-organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on violence against women in politics (VAWP) on March 2018 in New York. More than 40 experts attended the meeting, including Members of Parliament and local government, academics, gender equality advocates, and representatives of regional human and women's rights monitoring mechanisms, electoral management bodies, UN agencies, and civil society organizations.

The result was the SRVAW Report on Violence against women in politics, presented to the General Assembly.<sup>1</sup> The SRVAW Report focuses on developing concrete tools to identify, address and prevent these

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<sup>1</sup> Report to the General Assembly, A/73/301

emerging and increasing forms of violence against women in politics and public life including during elections by all independent expert mechanisms, Parliaments, political parties and UN and regional organizations.

UN Women has released a report on the outcomes of the Expert Group Meeting.



The Platform mechanisms represented: Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Melissa Upreti, UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice (WGDAW); Feride Acar, Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of the Council of Europe (GREVIO); Sylvia Mesa, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Soyata Maiga, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR); Margarete May Macaulay, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Rapporteur on the Rights of Women (IA SWHR).

## V. Inter-American Commission on Human Rights - IACHR

10. The first meeting of the EDVAW Platform expert mechanisms held in one of the regions was organized on the margins of one of the 169th session of the **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights** of the Organization of American States (OAS), held in Boulder, Colorado, United States of America, in **October 2018** ([report](#)). This meeting provided a platform for exchanges and planning of joint activities related to specific thematic issues, such as violence against women in politics and the Femicide Watch initiative.



Participants: Dubravka Simonovic, Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); Dalia Leinarte, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Alda Facio, UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice (WGDAW); Sylvia Mesa, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Feride Acar, Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO); Margarette May Macaulay, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Rapporteur on the Rights of Women (IA SWHR); and supporting staff.

## VI. International Day on the Elimination of Violence against Women – 25 November 2018 ([statement](#))

11. EDVAW Platform in 2018 to mark the International Day on the Elimination of Violence against Women issued the joint Statement and called all States to: **End the global epidemic of femicide (\*NiUnaMenos) and support women speaking up against violence against women (\*MeToo)** (November 2018)

The Platform’s seven expert mechanisms **jointly called on all States and all relevant stakeholders worldwide to end the global epidemic of femicide or gender-related killings of women, and gender-based violence against women.**

“The Experts, therefore, call for strengthened cooperation between independent global and regional mechanisms, as common synergies and efforts to address violence against women under the existing normative framework on human rights, which will contribute to closing gaps in combating and preventing violence against women worldwide. The Experts also call for the inclusion of monitoring mechanisms to ensure full implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 “In this regard, the undersigned mechanisms urge States, civil society and other stakeholders, to intensify efforts to eradicate violence against women and to ensure that gender-based violence is no longer tolerated, **and reiterate their call to end the global epidemic of gender-based killings or femicides (#NiUnaMenos) and support the voices of those speaking up against endemic violence against women (#MeToo).**”

2019

## VII. Informal meeting during the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

12. It was not foreseen under the project, but since a majority of the expert mechanisms were attending the CSW an **Informal Meeting** of the Platform was held during the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the **Commission on the Status of Women, March 2019** ([report](#))



Participants: Dubravka Simonovic, Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); Bandana Rana and Lia Nadaraia, members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Ivana Radačić, Elizabeth Broderick and Melissa Upreti, members of, UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice (WGDAW); Sylvia Mesa, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Feride Acar, Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO); Margarette May Macaulay, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Rapporteur on the Rights of Women (IA SWHR); and supporting staff.

### 13. EDVAW joint statement “Push back the pushbacks and keep pushing back” (March 2019) ([statement](#))

At the closing of the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences (SRVAW) and the platform of independent United Nations and regional expert mechanisms on violence against women and women’s rights **joined the Secretary-General on the call for strengthened efforts to fight against pushbacks on women’s rights in all regions of the world.**

“The recommendations of these women’s rights independent mechanisms are guiding ongoing processes of incorporation and implementation of the international and regional women’s human rights instruments, which is what is needed particularly in the face of rising regressive movements striving to curtailing women’s rights, autonomy, dignity and choice” the experts say.

“Stronger and interconnected independent and regional women human rights mechanisms are best placed to jointly guide implementation of the international women’s rights instruments, the Beijing Platform for Action and 2030 SDG Agenda in its goal no 5.”

## VIII. Council of Europe – CoE

13. **Second official regional meeting** of the Platform of independent international and regional mechanisms on violence against women and women’s rights hosted by the **Council of Europe** in Strasbourg, May 2019 ([report](#))



Participants: Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); Hilary Gbedemah, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Feride Acar, Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO); Daniele Cangemi, Head of Equality and Human Dignity Department at the Council of Europe; Sylvia Mesa, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Margarette May Macaulay, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Rapporteur on the Rights of Women (IA SWHR); Ivana Radačić, UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice (WGDAW); Lucy Asuagbor, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of women in Africa (A SRWHR).

14. Panel: The EDVAW Platform experts participated in the Council of Europe Conference **“Women’s rights at the Crossroads: strengthening international cooperation to close the gap between legal frameworks and their implementation”** hosted by the Council of Europe on **May 2019** in Strasbourg (France)

15. EDVAW Platform’s joint statement– **Intimate partner violence against women is an essential factor in the determination of child custody** ([statement](#))

The Platform of undersigned United Nations and regional independent mechanisms on violence against women and women’s rights voiced its concern over patterns across various jurisdictions of the world that **ignore intimate partner violence against women in determining child custody cases**. These patterns re-

veal underlying discriminatory gender bias and harmful gender stereotypes against women. Ignoring intimate partner violence against women in the determination of child custody can result in serious risks to the children and thus must be considered to ensure and grant their effective protection.

The experts reiterated that the CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, affirms that “perpetrators or alleged perpetrators’ rights or claims during and after judicial proceedings, including with respect to property, privacy, child custody, access, contact and visitation, **should be determined in the light of women’s and children’s human rights to life and physical, sexual and psychological integrity, and guided by the principle of the best interests of the child**”. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention) in its article 31 requires States to “take **the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that, in the determination of custody and visitation rights of children, incidents of violence covered by the scope of this Convention are taken into account**” and that “the exercise of any visitation or custody rights does not jeopardize the rights and safety of the victim or children”.

The experts also expressed concern for the recent inclusion of “parental alienation” as an index term in the new WHO International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as a “Caregiver-child relationship problem” “Accusations of parental alienation by abusive fathers against mothers must be considered as a continuation of power and control by state agencies and actors, including those deciding on child custody.”

16. Joint EDVAW Platform Statement: “**Violence and harassment** against women and girls **in the world of work** is a human rights violation, say independent human rights mechanisms on violence against women and women’s rights” (May 2019) ([statement](#))

The Platform called on all States taking part in the negotiations to uphold standards from the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, known as Belém do Pará Convention, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, known as Maputo Protocol and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, known as the Istanbul Convention.

“We have achieved strong human rights standards and consider that these rollbacks are unacceptable. The role of this platform is to continue upholding these standards, and reminding States of their international obligations. The platform therefore urges States to support the adoption of a strong new ILO instrument which is aligned to the already agreed standards on human rights. The platform reiterates that it is of paramount importance that States comply with the existing international legal standards recognizing that the human rights of women are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.

17. Joint EDVAW Statement “**Absence of consent must become the global standard for definition of rape**” on the International Day on the Elimination of Violence against Women - 25 November 2019 ([press release](#) and [statement](#))

*Joint call the by the Platform of independent United Nations and regional expert mechanisms on violence against women and women's rights to **act against rape and to ensure that the absence of consent is central to the definition of rape.***

The *Platform of 7 independent United Nations and regional expert mechanisms on violence against women and women's rights* jointly call upon all States and relevant stakeholders worldwide to act against rape as a form of gender based violence and a human rights violation, and, to ensure that the definition of rape is based on the absence of consent, in line with international standards. More efforts must also be made to ensure prosecution of rape in times of peace and in conflict.

**The platform ... notes that rape is one of the most underreported crimes, and even when it is reported it is rarely prosecuted. This is due to a number of factors including gender based stereotypes, as well as criminal justice systems which define rape based on the use of force. These present the key obstacles for needed change.**

The persistence of widespread and systematic rape and other form of sexual violence against women and girls, even in States that have proclaimed zero tolerance on violence against women, demonstrates that sexual violence is deeply entrenched in our still predominantly patriarchal societies. Power and control continue to create a social environment whereby such violence is normalized, and gender-based stereotypes on the role of women in society undermine and devalue women. **These factors contribute to the unacceptable tolerance of rape, including within criminal justice systems, often resulting in impunity for perpetrators.** Moreover, criminal justice systems that adopt force-based definitions of rape often require evidence that the perpetrator used coercion and that the victim failed to fight back. As such, the burden is placed on the woman to prove that she resisted. If unable to do so, the perpetrator would walk free while the victim is left stigmatized.

- Revise Criminal/Penal codes and ensure that the definition of rape is based on the absence of consent, and that it is in line with international standards,
- Explicitly criminalize rape and sexual violence within marriage;
- Eradicate harmful and discriminatory gender stereotypes around sexual violence, including from within criminal justice systems that have often resulted in impunity for perpetrators, and collect data on rape prosecution.
- Ensure the availability of accountability mechanisms to address impunity;
- Ensure that investigations into, or prosecution of rape offences, shall not be wholly dependent upon a report or complaint filed by a victim, and that the proceedings may be carried out even if the victim withdraws the complaint.
- Ensure effective victim protection during the legal process, through free legal aid and support in court, not having to meet the defendant when appearing in court, *in camera* proceedings, testifying through video link and prohibition of introducing survivors' sexual history into proceedings;
- Ensure wide availability of specialist support services providing forensic examinations, counselling, trauma support, and access to health services and other forms of support for victims of sexual violence;
- Ensure adequate and comprehensive reparations are provided, to women and girls victims of sexual violence, both in times of war and peace, in line with international standards

## IX. African Union

18. The first EDVAW Platform meeting in the **African region** took place in the context of the 35th Pre-summit CSOs Consultative meeting, scheduled from 3 to 4 February 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The meeting was organized under the leadership of the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women its causes and consequences, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special Rapporteur on Rights of Women in Africa and in collaboration with the Secretariat of Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for Eastern Africa (EARO). The Consultation sought to contribute to the discussions at the AU Executive Council with Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which took place from 6 to 7 February, and the Assembly, with the participation of Heads of State and Government from 9 to 10 February 2020.



EDVAW experts at the Platform meeting. Participants: Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); Sylvia Mesa, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Margarette May Macaulay, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Rapporteur on the Rights of Women (IA SWHR); Meskerem Geset Techane, Chair of the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls (WGDAW); Lucy Asuagbor, Special Rapporteur on the rights of women in Africa (A SRWHR); Marceline Naudi, Council of Europe Group of Experts



on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), via Skype. During the meeting, the experts agreed on an official name for the independent women’s human rights expert mechanism: the Platform of experts on the Elimination of Discrimination and Violence Against Women, or EDVAW Platform.

19. The EDVAW Platform experts participated in a Panel in the context of the 35<sup>th</sup> GIMAC consultation, on “**Addressing the root causes of conflict-related gender based violence and inequality as a means to silencing the guns: experiences from different regions**”, February 2020, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



The EDVAW Platform experts at the panel on conflict and gender-based discrimination and violence against women. Participants: Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); Sylvia Mesa, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Margarette May Macaulay, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Rapporteur on the Rights of Women (IA SWHR); Meskerem Geset Techane, Chair of the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls (WGDAW); Lucy Asuagbor, Special Rapporteur on the rights of women in Africa (A SRWHR); Marceline Naudi, Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), via Skype.

20. Meetings with **African Union officials**: the EDVAW Platform experts met with Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Political Affairs; Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil, Commissioner for

Social Affairs; and Victoria Maloka, Acting Director of the Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) of the African Union Commission (AUC), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in February 2020.

During the meetings, the experts presented the initiative of the Platform and its efforts to increase collaboration between UN and regional experts mechanisms on EDVAW. The African Union Commission officials welcomed the call for increased collaboration between the Platform's expert mechanisms and the African Union.



Participants: Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); Sylvia Mesa, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); Margarette May Macaulay, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Rapporteur on the Rights of Women (IA SWHR); Lucy Asuagbor, Special Rapporteur on the rights of women in Africa (A SRWHR); Marceline Naudi; Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Political Affairs; Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs; and staff supporting them.

21. Joint statement: the experts adopted a joint statement reminding States and stakeholders that the **“Elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including its root causes, must be integrated in all efforts to silence the guns before, during and after conflict”**, February 2020 ([press release](#) and [statement](#)).

The EDVAW Platform called for renewed efforts by States, international and regional organizations and relevant stakeholders to **address the root causes of gender-based violence against women and girls before, during, and after conflict as a continuum that requires a holistic approach for its eradication.** Meaningful participation of women in all peacebuilding processes will only become a reality when the elimination of discrimination and violence against women is fully integrated into the Women, Peace and Security agenda, in line with international human rights norms and standards and Sustainable Development Goal No 5.

20 years after the ground-breaking UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which established a framework on women, peace and security (WPS), some progress has been made in acknowledging the gendered dimensions of conflict, women's specific security needs and the importance of women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution. However, significant challenges remain towards its full implementation and promoting accountability for it. **The EDVAW Platform calls for a holistic, gendered and intersectional approach to conflict prevention that integrates the elimination of discrimination and violence against women and the realization of gender equality as an integral part of peace and security.**

Prepared by: Dubravka Simonovic, Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SRVAW); with the support of OHCHR staff.