**RE:** Call for submissions to all stakeholders regarding the gap in incorporating and implementing the international and regional standards related to violence against women

***1.    Do you consider that there is a need for a separate legally binding treaty on violence against women with its separate monitoring body?***

Yes. We believe that a separate treaty puts the necessary impetus for ending violence against women on states and related bodies in a way that currently does not exist. A legally binding treaty will help address the gross violations against women, but also put in place the structures, like a monitoring body, that can spur countries to do their due diligence on violence against women and set a clear global standard for what it means to protect women and girls.

***2.    Do you consider that there is an incorporation gap of the international or regional human rights norms and standards?***

Yes. Governments and regions have no incentive to do anything under CEDAW or other soft law mechanisms. Several areas have no legally binding regional mechanisms, such as Asia, the Middle East and Oceana. These gaps need to be addressed.

***3.    Do you believe that there is a lack of implementation of the international and regional legislation into the domestic law?***

Yes. Right now legislation and implementation are piecemeal. International law helps countries to adopt stronger domestic policies as there are clear international standards and expectations. It gives governments the political will to act and institutional stakeholders and citizens a tool to put pressure on their governments to make changes.

***4.    Do you think that there is a fragmentation of policies and legislation to address gender-based violence?***

Yes. Violence against women and girls takes many forms. Having an international treaty that defines what VAW in a comprehensive ways helps countries develop policies that will address the issue more comprehensively – and not simply reflect local practices and traditions that prevent action on VAW in its many forms. Such change is hard and takes time. But an international treaty gives countries a firm basis for reconsideration of their policies against violence in a more intentional process.

***5.    Could you also provide your views on measures needed to address this normative and implementation gap and to accelerate prevention and elimination of violence against women?***

The first step is the development of a Global Treaty on Violence against Women and Girls that has its own monitoring body and builds on the existing frameworks such as CEDAW and other established international and regional mechanisms.

But equally important is the impact a binding treaty will have on the international perception of violence against women and girls as a gross, endemic and systematic violation of their rights and agency as human beings.

Clearly, effective legislation that needs to create strong domestic policies. But this needs to be accompanied by education and development programs addressing violence against women at a family and community level. And activities much include all stakeholders, globally and domestically, including international and domestic business, civil society, donors, and community-based organizations.

I believe a VAW treaty would also spur needed complementary programs addressing violence by and against men. Research clearly shows that male violence against women is highly correlated with boys who have witnessed violence against their mothers by their fathers or mothers’ partners. Boys and men experience significant violence themselves, usually by boys and men, and such experience of violence is also correlated with their being violent with the women and girls in their lives.

Thus an international treaty can spur a much greater systematic focus on the causes of violence in society, and thus the treaty is essential for women and girls, but no less needed for men and boys.

**About Meridian Group International, Inc**.

Meridian is a woman-owned, small business that focuses on women’s health and reproductive rights as part of global development projects to expand women’s access to reproductive health and family planning projects. We are partners on several USAID-funding reproductive health projects, including the Evidence Project managed by the Population Council. A key component of our work in on the health policies and practices of multi-national corporations and their supply chains in low and middle income countries, with a particular focus on health of women workers. We have experience implementing culturally sensitive programs and policies in Asia, Africa, Latin America/Caribbean and South America.