The Wales Assembly of Women was established in 1984 to provide evidence from Wales and to take part in activities marking the end of the UN Decade for women (1975-1985).
WAW is committed to the [United Nation's Global Platform for Action](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm#framework) agreed by governments in Beijing, based on the need for Equality, Development and Peace.

**An organisation for the women of Wales and a means for cooperative action**
The objectives of WAW are the advancement of equality and human rights for the women of Wales and the promotion of equality in particular but not exclusively by all or any of the following means:

* by identifying areas of need and bearing in mind the scattered and often isolated character of many communities in Wales, to facilitate contact between individuals and groups for mutual support and to stimulate discussion, consultation and action on equality;
* by providing technical advice to government on equality issues;
* international advocacy on equality for women;
* commenting on proposed equality legislation;
* raising awareness of equality issues.

The Wales Assembly of Women is grateful for the opportunity to make a submission regarding the adequacy of the international legal framework on violence against women and girls and hopes that our input will form part of a larger piece of work that informs a full and frank Report by the Special Rapporteur.

The answers to all 5 questions have been amalgamated.

The Five Questions

1. Do you consider that there is a need for a separate legally binding treaty on violence against women with its separate monitoring body?
2. Do you consider that there is an incorporation gap of the international or regional human rights norms and standards?
3. Do you believe that there is a lack of implementation of the international and regional legislation into the domestic law?
4. Do you think that there is a fragmentation of policies and legislation to address gender-based violence?
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?

**There is a need for a New Treaty/Optional Protocol to CEDAW**

There is a need for a **Treaty** that specifically addresses the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls because such gender based violence is one of the most prevalent human rights abuses in the world. It is therefore of paramount importance to adopt such an agreement at the international legal level.

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) does not contain a specific article dealing with VAWG. There is thus a need for a new international law instrument with its own monitoring body that specifically recognises, identifies, and provides legally binding obligations to deal with all manifestations of violence against all women and girls.

Most examples of VAWG measures are in ‘soft law’. These are not legally binding such as: The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, numerous resolutions from different UN bodies, and General Comments and recommendations of treaty bodies, the General Recommendation No. 12 (1989) on violence against women, the CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation No. 19 on violence against women. CEDAW’s Article 2, interpreted with General Recommendation 19, is the existing legal mandate for the creation of laws prohibiting violence against women. General Recommendation 30 adopted in 2013 addresses the situation of VAWG in conflict and post-conflict settings. However, **although soft laws may be influential in developing norms, their non-binding nature effectively means that States cannot be held responsible for violations.**

There are regional human rights treaties that address violence against women, namely the 1994 Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará), the 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and the 2014 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). These regional instruments are being utilised successfully in certain countries, but they are not suitable as instruments to cover the globe**.** That also leaves many regions not covered in terms of normative law: (e.g. Asia, the Pacific and the Middle East among others).

That fact alone and the acknowledgement that other international instruments addressing violence are not gender-specific, underscores the need for a universal legally binding instrument on violence against women and girls at the United Nations level.