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**INTERACTIVE EXPERT PANEL**

**Multisectoral Services and Responses for Women and Girls  
Subject to Violence**

**The need for a holistic response in the quest to eliminate violence against women and  
girls**

**by**

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**its causes and consequences**

Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues and Friends,

I would like to thank UN Women and the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women, for inviting me to participate in

movement have increasingly raised concerns about the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that lead to violence against women. My 2011 report to the Human Rights Council was devoted to this topic.<sup>1</sup>

education, employment situation, household size, marital relationships, and access to political

A holistic approach for the elimination of all forms of violence against all women therefore requires that systematic discrimination and marginalization must be factored in and addressed, as a key component of remedies offered.

My 2011 report reflects on how interpersonal violence against women, that is instances of economic, psychological, sexual, physical and verbal abuse, cannot be fully understood without considering the institutional and structural forms of violence against women. This is reflected in

employment, in terms of educational opportunities, access to resources, protection by the police and other State forces, and Government services and benefits. Additionally, an absence of laws that criminalize all forms of violence against women also serves as a form of structural violence.

There are clear synergies and linkages between interpersonal, institutional and structural violence against women. No form of interpersonal violence against women is devoid of structural violence

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and/or unequal access to resources may be structurally maintained by institutional factors such as differential inheritance rights, land tenure laws, and property ownershi

inability to own her own property or land may result from structural factors that contribute to her experiences of interpersonal violence. If a woman is dependent on her spouse or family network for her economic wellbeing, she is at greater risk of vulnerability to violence and also the ability to escape from harm.

their personal and traditional views on women, in many cases. Also, the lack of sensitivity and of a women's human rights perspective, often results in a lack of substantive protection for women victims.

In addition, police officers responses are limited in some cases, simply because of a lack of resources. While in some countries specialized police units have been put in place to address domestic violence and/or sexual violence cases, and officers have undergone specialized training, these units are often under-staffed and under-resourced, they are not available in all police stations or at all hours, and thus the responding officer at the scene of the crime is usually a generalist police officer, as opposed to a specialized one.

victims to court, help them create safety plans for themselves and their families, assist in finding shelter or temporary housing, and refer them to other resources and service providers.

### Prosecution and Punishment

The challenges faced by women victims of violence are also reflected in the inadequate responses by other sections of the criminal justice system. The relevant role-players rarely have the required levels of specialization and cases are often decided without the best interest of women in mind, and without due consideration of the consequences of structural and institutional of gender inequality and discrimination that is rooted in such violence.

Judicial practices include insensitivity, the discrediting o



women victims of violence, as well as to hold the perpetrators of such violence responsible for