

## Fact Sheet No. 2 - Promotion and Protection of the Human Rights of Women

*This fact sheet has been prepared for the purpose of highlighting to States the framework for promotion and protection of the human rights of women and how it could be addressed in the work of the Council*

The focus for the discussion under this item in the agenda/programme of work will be:

1. The identification and analysis of human rights violations that happen mainly or exclusively to women and girls, and/or which are largely invisible because of gender inequality and the venues in which the violations occur; and
2. The identification of necessary measures to prevent such violations and to promote the fulfillment of all human rights for women and girls.

Over the years, the international community has identified specific types of human rights abuses that are primarily associated with women and girls, including violence against women, trafficking in persons, and sexual and gender-based violence related to armed conflicts. However, women and girls also face other violations of their human rights in addition to violence and trafficking. While many of these violations could be discussed by the Council during its debate of civil and political rights or economic, social, and cultural rights, this agenda/programme of work item will allow for the gender-specific analysis necessary to understand and respond appropriately to the experiences of women and girls as they differ from those of men and boys.

In examining human rights violations under the item "Promotion and Protection of the Human Rights of Women", the Council must take into account the effects of gender and how violations may be gender-specific. Some of the key aspects to be considered, along with examples of how the specific experiences of women and/or girls could be integrated into them, are provided below.

- **Forms of violations:** Lack of respect for the confidentiality of patients affects both men and women, but it may deter women from seeking advice and treatment and thereby adversely affect their health and well-being. As such, women may be less willing to seek medical care for sexually-transmitted diseases or diseases of the genital tract, for contraception, or in cases where they have suffered sexual or physical violence.
- **Circumstances in which violations occur:** In many countries, women constitute a major component of the "non-standard" work force, such as temporary, casual, part-time, contract and home-based employment. In such contexts, they disproportionately lack the protection of labor laws and health and safety regulations, from which those in the formal labor sector benefit.
- **Consequences of violations:** Though both men and women may be subjected to torture in conflict situations or in detention, women who are raped face the additional and specific consequence of forced pregnancy, and rejection by their partners and community as a result of being raped or subjected to other forms of sexual violence.
- **Availability and accessibility to remedies:** Levels of literacy are often lower for women, interfering with their ability to file complaints or access courts. Women often face community pressures not to seek redress for abuses. National laws may be inadequate to provide remedies for violations; or, when they do exist, *de facto* discrimination may deter or obstruct women's recourse to remedies.

Under this item, the Council might appropriately

- Ask its Special Procedures to report regularly on gender specific issues related to each mandate;
- Determine measures to cover protection gaps for women and girls identified through its planning and capacity-building phase;
- Adopt resolutions to address identified violations;
- Make decisions with regard to specific violations of the human rights of women that merit deeper analysis and discussion in special Council sessions; and

- Offer States the possibility to share best or promising practices aimed at improving the enjoyment of all human rights for women and girls.