

Indicators on violence against women



UN Statistical Indicators on VAW

In 2006, the UN General Assembly requested the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) to develop a set of possible indicators on violence against women to assist UN Member States in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women, building on the work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences. For this purpose, a working group named 'Friends of the Chair' (FoC) was established by the UN Statistical Commission in 2008. The core set of indicators proposed in 2009 and adopted in 2011 are listed in the box below. Because of the name of the working group, these indicators are also sometimes referred to as the 'FoC VAW indicators'.

In 2009 the UNSC requested the United Nations Statistical Division and other stakeholders, including the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the UN Regional Commissions, to draw upon and further elaborate existing methodological guidelines for measuring violence against women and to initiate a trial compilation of national statistics based on the interim set of indicators. The 'UNECE questionnaire module' was developed as part of this initiative, and, following the adoption of the core set of statistical indicators on VAW, in 2014 the UN Statistics Division, in collaboration with various stakeholders, published the 'Guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women: statistical surveys', to facilitate the measurement of these indicators.

In 2011, the UN Statistical Commission adopted the following core set of nine statistical indicators on violence against women, to be measured through surveys.

1. Total and age specific rate of women subjected to physical violence in the last 12 months by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency
2. Total and age specific rate of women subjected to physical violence during lifetime by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency
3. Total and age specific rate of women subjected to sexual violence in the last 12 months by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency
4. Total and age specific rate of women subjected to sexual violence during lifetime by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency
5. Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months by frequency
6. Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by current or former intimate partner during lifetime by frequency
7. Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to psychological violence in the past 12 months by the intimate partner
8. Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to economic violence in the past 12 months by the intimate partner
9. Total and age specific rate of women subjected to female genital mutilation

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicators on VAW

In September 2000, leaders of 189 countries gathered at the United Nations headquarters and signed the historic Millennium Declaration, in which they committed to achieving a set of eight measurable goals that range from halving extreme poverty and hunger to promoting gender equality and reducing child mortality, by the target date of 2015. Violence against women was not included in the MDGs though it was recognized that violence hindered progress towards the MDGs.⁷

The new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by Member States in September 2015 sets out 17 Goals and 169 associated targets to be achieved by 2030. Member States have adopted a comprehensive framework that includes Goal 5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, as well as mainstreaming of gender across other Goals and Targets. Target 5.2., “Elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation”, includes specific indicators for measuring violence against women (see box).

In addition, SDG Target 11.7 (on providing safe public spaces) and Target 16.1 (on reducing all forms of violence and related deaths) include specific indicators that can also be used to measure and monitor prevalence of violence against women and girls.

While the SDG indicators are crucial for measuring progress towards the 2030 Agenda goals and targets, they have only limited value for monitoring the extent, types and patterns of violence that women experience throughout their lives.. The larger set of UN indicators as well as the further measurement of risk factors, underlying causes and consequences remain crucial as a basis for informed and effective policies and programmes.

In 2016, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals, in the context of Goal 5, Target 5.2., “Elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation”, the following two specific indicators for monitoring prevalence of violence against women by 2030 were formulated:

- 5.2.1. Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner, in the last 12 months, by form of violence and by age group.
- 5.2.2. Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner, in the last 12 months, by age group and place of occurrence.

7 WHO (2005). Addressing violence against women and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. http://www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/knowledge/who_fch_gwh_05_1/en/