

Introduction

Violence against Women (VAW) is a universal problem that continues to persist and constitutes a wide spread violation of human rights and a real obstacle to peace and development.

Violence against women is present in all countries, cutting across boundaries of culture, religion, education and age. No society can claim to be free from such violence. Specific group of women are more exposed and more vulnerable, including minority, indigenous, migrant, refugee women and those in armed conflict as well as women with disabilities and elderly.

The Family is often equated as a place where members seek love, security and safety. However in many cases, it becomes the place where violence is perpetrated against women and children.

In recent years, Women Organizations have provided leadership in raising awareness about VAW and thanks to their tireless efforts and work, there has been a greater understanding of domestic violence, and an international consensus has developed on the need to deal with this problem at all levels.

Since the adoption in 1993 of Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women which constitutes the first international Human Rights instrument to deal exclusively with this phenomena and the Fourth Conference on Women held in Beijing on 1995 that included the VAW as one of its twelve strategic objectives, a growing momentum has compelled a better understanding of the causes and consequences of violence against women and many positives actions have been taken in different countries.

A Special Rapporteur on violence against women was appointed by United Nations in 1994 with a mandate to seek and receive information from Governments, Organizations and individuals on VAW and to recommend measures to eliminate such violence.

Violence against women is a complex problem and there is no strategy that will deal with it in all situations. All strategies and policies should be defined within a comprehensive and integrated approach and should take into account partnership with different stakeholders, Family, Local community, Civil Society, State and International Organizations.

The launch in March 2008 by the Secretary of the United Nations of a multi-year (until 2005) campaign to end violence against women will certainly contribute to strengthen political commitments and to enhance efforts at all levels to prevent and end violence as well as to find specific answers to this issue. At this occasion, the Secretary General of the UN has presented a depth study on violence against women that included key finding and recommendations.

Guided by the Vision of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned and inspired by Her Orientations on better educating and strengthening the Family as a basic unit of the society, The Supreme Council for Family Affairs (Women Department) the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development (Family Policy Division) are contributing to this campaign by organizing a Colloquium on the impact of violence against women on the family which is one of the first events, after the launching of the campaign of the UNSG, in the Middle East and the region.

During two days, High Representatives from United Nations, Specialized Agencies, Professors, Jurists, Experts from Arab and Regional organizations and regional and international Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's) will:

- Contribute to raise awareness on the nature extent and causes of Violence against Women in the Region and Worldwide;
- Build collaboration among different stakeholders including, policy makers, researchers international organizations and civil society particularly NGO's in order to exchange information and best practices and provide effective and efficient responses;
- Support innovative and integrated approach as well as social and legislative actions.