

*UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girls, the empowerment of women, the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action, peace and security.*

*UN Women supports Bosnia and Herzegovina to achieve gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement international gender equality commitments.*

## Enhancing Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Women and Girls in Bosnia and Herzegovina

### *Why is there a need to support a programme that puts efforts on ending violence against women and girls?*

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) continues to be a widespread social problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), and a serious violation of fundamental human rights. This type of violence is still seen and tolerated as a socially acceptable behaviour and is justified by traditional and patriarchal conceptions of the role and status of women in BiH society. The entry into force of the Council of Europe Convention (CoE) on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) in August 2014 has marked an important milestone in the BiH efforts to curb violence against women and girls.

### *What is the rationale for UN Women intervention?*

An important part of UN Women's work on ending VAWG in BiH is related to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, which obliges states to address violence against women and girls in all its forms and to take measures to prevent it, protect its victims and prosecute the perpetrators. Against this background UN Women has developed a comprehensive programme addressing VAWG in BiH. The programme builds on the first study on prevalence and characteristics of VAWG in BiH and situation analyses on VAWG including mapping of available services for survivors. The study and analyses have been undertaken by UN Women in collaboration with different partners including the BiH Agency for Gender Equality.

### *What are the objectives of the new programme?*

**The overall goal of the programme is to reduce violence against women in BiH by preventing, addressing and combating its presence and prevalence in the society.**

The new programme aims to support the BiH Government and civil society organizations in addressing a number of gaps in the implementation of legislation and government policies, as well as in the areas of service provision, long-term support to the victims of gender based violence and prevention (particularly focusing on early intervention and the active inclusion of boys and



### *Title*

*Programme for Enhancing Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Women and Girls in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

### *Budget*

*Total: tbc*

### *Duration*

*3 years (2016 – 2019)*

### *Executing Agency*

*UN Women*

### *Partners*

*The main partners for the programme is the Agency for Gender Equality and the Entity Gender Centres, but partners will also include other institutions like the Ministries of Health and Social Welfare as well statistical agencies and civil society including the Safe Network, a coalition of NGOs providing services to women. UN Women will also cooperate with other UN Agencies.*

### *Beneficiaries of this programme*

*Primary beneficiaries: women victims of violence, including women from marginalized groups. Girls and young men will also be a big target audience since it is crucial to involve them in innovative prevention programs. Secondary beneficiaries will be service providers, professionals, government officials at all levels, CSO personnel and media professionals.*

### *Some facts on the situation of GBV in Bosnia and Herzegovina:*

*The findings of the First National Study on Prevalence and Characteristics of Violence against Women in BiH, published in 2013, show that **women in BiH are exposed to a high risk of violence, first in her immediate, intimate environment of relationship with her partner and family, and then***

men). The programme has three main objectives that are aligned with the CEDAW Concluding Observations and Recommendations for BiH.

**Objective 1** An efficient accountability system, in line with international commitments, to continuously monitor the implementation of the regulations related to violence against women established and institutional mechanisms for data collection strengthened.

This outcome combines data collection with policy developments and implementation of the relevant international agreements such as the Istanbul Convention. As a result of this component, a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of laws and policies will be established in the selected locations and the implementation of policies at the local level will be ensured. It will also be ensured that policies have the same effects for marginalized groups of women as they do for the mainstream population (making marginalized groups integral part of every policy on ending violence against women).

**Objective 2** Service provision enhanced and adequate assistance, protection and rehabilitation to women victims of violence provided.

Under this objective UN Women will ensure 1) that the State and Entity institutions have the capacities to develop and implement policies, based on the standards and international obligations, and 2) that the selected communities involved in the programme are able to provide standardized and coordinated services to the survivors and perpetrators. Work under this objective will enhance the access to support and protection services for women at risk and for survivors of violence. The standards used by the service providers for survivors and perpetrators will be aligned with the Istanbul Convention, and effective coordination will be facilitated between the CSOs and the government institutions (police, centres for social care, medical care centres, legal aid and psychosocial support services, safe houses, and other).

**Objective 3** Societal attitudes on gender norms and gender based violence influenced among men, young people and vulnerable groups of women.

Under this objective UN Women will focus on: 1) engaging boys and men in promoting gender equality, eliminating gender stereotypes, and facilitating the community based discussion and action groups, aimed at enlisting men's active participation in preventing violence and promoting positive role models (with a special focus on the high-school and university students, young fathers, sportsmen, and media, not excluding other target groups) and 2) reducing stigmatization of survivors, thereby encouraging reporting and processing of the cases, raising awareness about the criminal nature of gender-based violence and promoting the responsiveness and use of services.

**in the broader community.**

*Findings indicate that almost half of the women in BiH (older than 15) have been subjected at least once in their lifetime to some of four kinds of violence (physical, psychological, sexual and economic).*

**Istanbul Convention**

*The Convention require Member States to prevent, protect, persecute and monitor the occurrence of VAWG. The Convention is unique in setting standards for the protection of survivors and definitions of which services must be available. It is also unique in pointing out that VAWG and domestic violence cannot be addressed without looking at gender equality issues.*

*UN Women supported BiH to become signatory of the Istanbul Convention paving the way for the Convention to enter into force. Considering the multitude of issues the Convention covers, UN Women supported BiH institutions to understand the convention implications and devise plan for its implementation.*

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