



***'Strengthening state and civil society action  
to overcome violence against women in Haiti'***

**A Baseline Study**

**August 2008**



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***with the assistance of***

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**List of Acronyms**

AFASDA	Association Femmes Soleil d'Haïti
AHDESE	Association des Hommes Dévoués du Sud Est
CASEC	Conseil d'Administration de la Section Communale
CGF	Centre de Gestion des Fonds de la coopération canadienne
CONAP	Coordination Nationale de Plaidoyer pour les Droits des Femmes
CNDDR	Commission Nationale de Désarmement, de Démantèlement et Réinsertion
DFID	Department for International Development
EMMUS	Enquête Mortalité, Morbidité et Utilisation des Services
FGD	Focus group discussion
FOVIS	Foyer des Vaudouisant(e)s pour l'intégration sociale
GAKODA	Gason Konsekan Dayiti
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDI	In-depth interviews
KOFAVIV	Komisyon Fanm Viktim pou Viktim
MCFDF	Ministère de la Condition Féminine et aux Droits de la Femme/ Ministry for Women's Affairs and Women's Rights
MINUSTAH	Mission des Nations Unies pour la Stablisation d'Haïti/UN Stablisation Mission in Haiti
MJSP	Ministère de la Justice et de la Sécurité Publique/Ministry for Justice and Public Security
MSPP	Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population/Ministry of Public Health and Population
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PEP	Post-exposure prophylaxis
PNH	Police Nationale d'Haïti/Haitian National Police
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SOFA	Solidarite Fanm Ayisyen
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNPOL	United Nations police
URAMEL	Unité de Recherche et d'Action Médico Légale

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## **Executive Summary**

This study was commissioned by UNIFEM within the context of two-year DFID funded project entitled “Encouraging Women’s Involvement in Peace-building and the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict: community-based approaches’, to be implemented over 2007-2008 in 6 countries, including Haiti. It seeks to provide an overview of the situation in Haiti with regard to the efforts made to overcome violence against women as well as some of the perceptions of key actors and community representatives of violence and security, particularly as they relate to women. Following an initial desk review, a combination of in-depth interviews with key informants and focus group discussions with men and women in 5 localities (Leogane, La Vallee de Jacmel, Carrefour, Plaisance and Fort Liberte) were used to generate data that has formed the basis of this report.

Quantitative information about the level of insecurity in Haiti is limited, although certain small-scale studies give a snapshot of the overall situation. There is slightly more data available specifically on violence against women. This shows the rates of such violence are high. The most recent household health and demographic survey shows that 25% of women have suffered violence from their partner, while figures collected by women’s organisations show that increasing numbers of women are coming forward to denounce the aggression they have suffered. This tendency was confirmed by this study. All forms of sexual and gender-based violence – particularly domestic violence and, to a lesser extent rape – are found to be widespread in all the areas included.

In response, women’s organisations in Haiti have become increasingly well organised. Their presence in a locality is considered a deterrent to violence in its own right and has helped encourage women take action. Unfortunately, they are unable to respond to the demand throughout the country. The Concertation Nationale - a coordinating body bringing state, international and civil society organisations together - has proved an important mechanism that has enabled considerable institutional progress to be made towards tackling SGBV. Its efforts have resulted in a common plan to end violence against women, a strengthened legal framework (notably the adoption of a decree making rape a criminal offence) and the development of important tools for the care and support of women victims of violence, such as the introduction of free medical certificates.

Participants in the focus groups identified theft/robbery as the most common form of violence experienced by both men and women, together with inter-personal violence, verbal abuse and structural violence. Armed violence was most serious in Carrefour but also affects areas close to large cities (Leogane and Plaisance) while causing fewer problems in more isolated areas. Police violence is a serious problem in Carrefour and women feel a strong sense of insecurity as a result.

Examples of sexual, physical, psychological and economic violence were given in all of the areas visited. As well as domestic violence and rape, women also pointed to threats/insults from men and their failure to take responsibility for children’s upkeep as being serious problems. Women and men ranked domestic violence as the most common form of violence against women. Rape was judged to be less common but nonetheless very serious. Several of the men attempted to justify violence in terms of women’s own behaviour. Although there is a greater willingness to declare cases of violence today, women are still reluctant to come forward because they feel shame or fear reprisals,

because they are economically dependent on the perpetrator or because they lack confidence in the statutory bodies charged with dealing with SGBV.

A significant minority of rape cases involve multiple aggressors. Collective rape has at times been used as a weapon but the reduced space for political violence at present seems to have brought this phenomenon under control. A more pervasive form of collective rape was nonetheless encountered in all areas, targeting young women deemed to adopt loose behaviour. Troops belonging to the UN peacekeeping force, MINUSTAH, have been involved with documented cases of sexual violence. Internal disciplinary measures have been taken but there has been a lack of transparency in dealing with them

All women of varied age and socio-economic profiles are subject to SGBV, although young women are particularly vulnerable. Carnival, the *rara* season, patron saints' days and holidays are times when violence against women is most widespread. Poverty and women's low incomes create a situation of dependency on men that binds them to their partners. Economic hardship is also widely blamed for being the cause of men's violent behaviour. At the same time, women are ridiculed by men for their inability to contribute to the household's income.

Men have a dominant role in Haitian society. Cultural norms legitimising men's status sustain prejudicial attitudes and provide the social sanction necessary for violence to take place. Men refer to women's infidelity, their failure to cater to their needs in the expected manner and women's provocative dress. Some men were resentful that organisations exist to assist women but not men.

Following the episodes of collective violence experienced in the country over the last 5 years, a state disarmament commission has been established with the aim of eradicating violence and improving citizen security. Women have been the specific targets of such violence as well as perpetrators but receive relatively little attention through these interventions, which are focused on a limited number of priority urban areas, and SGBV is barely addressed. Yet it is clear from this and other studies that protection from gender-based violence is an extremely important aspect of security for women throughout the country.

Frequently, people prefer to turn to informal or traditional mechanisms in order to settle their differences rather than to formal state institutions, which are expensive and mistrusted. These bodies, which include self-defence brigades, family councils and peer control by members of the same *vaudou* society, tend to favour reconciliation and maintaining the status quo, often at women's expense. There is social pressure for couples to stay united and domestic violence is seldom taken before legal authorities. In many cases, the police also seek reconciliation, while few such cases ever reach the courts, in part because women are reluctant to take such drastic measures against their partner.

Nonetheless, a good deal of progress has been made in terms of planning a more systematic response to SGBV. Inter-ministerial coordination has led to a noticeably stronger commitment to tackling violence against women in the security/justice sector in particular and, to a lesser extent, in public health and education. Certain emblematic cases have demonstrated that it is possible to achieve redress within the Haitian legal system. Nonetheless, the steps towards getting proper medical and legal care and support are long and complex, and there are many flaws in the system. Confidence in the legal system – particularly outside Port-au-Prince – remains low. Judges are

accused of corruption or of promoting out-of-court settlements. In some cases, sentences have been below that stipulated by law. The provision of legal aid by a number of NGOs has therefore proven extremely valuable in bringing certain cases to court but such assistance is not available throughout the country.

Men and women have a broadly favourable but nonetheless ambiguous attitude towards the police. There is considerable recognition of their role in providing security at a community level but the performance of the PNH is felt to be mixed. They are not always seen to have the will to respond and may fail to come out when called because they have no vehicle or fuel. The police themselves cite logistical constraints as being among their chief difficulties and they undoubtedly face great challenges in covering large areas with very few resources. There are currently too few police to meet the country's security needs. A more systematic response by the police depends on adequate structures and training. Timid steps have started to be taken but progress is slow. A National Coordinator for Women's Affairs has been appointed within the PNH, as have gender focal points in certain departments. Police need to be able to receive women who have been victims of violence in an open and non-judgmental manner. Training on SGBV for the PNH has only been dispensed in an *ad hoc* way to date, so that not all police have benefited. In order to ensure a systematically supportive environment for victims of SGBV, plans have been developed to open women's police desks at a number of pilot stations, but these have yet to be implemented.

The introduction of the protocol for the care of victims of sexual violence has been accompanied by training for staff within the public health system. Nonetheless access to this treatment is limited in rural areas and the cost of drugs can be prohibitive. The delivery of free medical certificates represents a significant advance but their issue still encounters certain problems. An increasing number of victims are now coming forward within the recommended 72 hours in order to receive proper treatment.

Figures currently collected by state authorities do not enable any national data to be collected on SGBV. Either it is not assembled at all or is not organised in such a way that the gender-specific nature of individual cases can be identified. The Concertation Nationale is in the process of finalising a single data collection form which it is envisaged will help establish an accurate picture of violence against women in order to help inform policy decisions.

The report concludes with recommendations for certain modifications to the project's logical framework in order to make it coincide with its findings.

## **1. Introduction**

This study was commissioned by UNIFEM within the context of two-year DFID funded project entitled “Encouraging Women’s Involvement in Peace-building and the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict: community-based approaches’, to be implemented over 2007-2008 in 6 countries (Afghanistan, Liberia, Rwanda, East Timor, Uganda and Haiti). It seeks to work towards the realisation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The overall objective has therefore been defined as:

Objective: To enable women and Haitian communities to have greater power in order to be able to work towards UN Security Council Resolution 1325

The two main intended outcomes from the project in Haiti have been defined as follows:

Outcome 1: Women are involved in effective initiatives aimed at keeping the peace within their communities and at a national level

Outcome 2: Women play an important role in the process of strengthening community-based approaches to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and in responding to the needs of survivors

This study is intended to provide an overview of the situation in Haiti with respect to the efforts made to overcome violence against women and to review the appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed outcomes and indicators in order to provide the basis for future monitoring and evaluation (see Terms of Reference in Appendix B)<sup>1</sup>. This report therefore seeks to present existing institutional mechanisms and capacities with respect to violence against women, as well as some of the perceptions of key actors and community representatives of the issue of violence and security, particularly as it relates to women’s needs. It concludes with a presentation of certain key findings and recommendations for how the project’s logical framework should be modified in order to provide the most relevant basis for assessing the project’s impact.

## **2. Definition of violence**

The definition of violence most widely used by organisations working on women’s rights and to end violence against women in Haiti is that contained in the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Convention of Belem do Para):

*‘Any act or conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or private sphere.’*

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<sup>1</sup> It was agreed with the UNIFEM team that the organisational assessment of community-based groups working on the issue of violence against women would not be included within the scope of the current study since it would require a different approach to that planned in the framework of this piece of work.

Women and men's perceptions of violence were explored during the course of the field work (see section 6) and broadly concur with this definition. However, given the emphasis in the terms of reference and initial project proposal on the dimensions of violence linked to security and freedom from fear, it is these aspects of violence – sexual and physical (domestic) violence in particular – that have been most fully explored in the context of this study.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Choice of methodology**

The work involved in preparing this report was largely carried out over 6-weeks, split into two periods: late January-early February and late June-mid July 2008<sup>2</sup>. The study involved an initial desk review of available published and grey material on relevant issues, followed by field work, during which 37 in-depth interviews were carried out with key informants (14 in Port-au-Prince and 23 in selected locations outside the capital; see Appendix D for full list of participants) and 11 focus group discussions were organised (two in each of the 5 areas chosen for the study: one involving women only and the other with men, plus an additional focus group with elected officials in Leogane).

In discussion with UNIFEM staff, research questions were defined as:

- What perceptions/social representation do men and women in the areas included in the study have of violence/insecurity/peace?
- What kinds of violence are experienced by people in these areas? How frequent and how serious are they considered to be?
- What forms of SGBV take place in the communities included in the study? When, where and how often do they take place? Who is responsible?
- What are women's priorities in terms of reducing the violence affecting them?
- What mechanisms/bodies/initiatives, whether formal or informal, currently exist in the communities included in the study for a) preventing/deterring/reducing violence and b) responding to violence? Do they themselves use violence to achieve their goals? How effective are they? Do they include women? Do they respond to women's priorities?
- What mechanisms/bodies/initiatives, whether formal or informal, currently exist in the communities included in the study for tackling SGBV, if any? How effective are they in the eyes of local women?
- What links do research participants consider there to be between SGBV and other forms of violence?
- What needs to change in order for levels of violence, and SGBV in particular, to be reduced?

The field work was conducted in 5 areas. These were chosen on the basis of the following criteria:

- At least one area from each department included in the project (West, South East, North and North East)

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<sup>2</sup> The interruption between these two periods did represent a slight constraint but was negotiated with UNIFEM as a result of unfortunate personal events affecting the consultant.

- Inclusion of the only urban area involved in the project (Carrefour) given the distinctive characteristics and relatively high rates of violence in such areas
- Areas not covered in the recent IDB study into SGBV
- Areas that are relatively isolated in terms of access to communications networks
- Communes with a low ranking in terms of access to services in the IDB poverty map of Haiti

For a map of the areas finally selected (Léogane, La Vallée de Jacmel, Carrefour, Plaisance and Fort Liberté), see Appendix A.

The focus group guides, which are included in Appendix C, were initially tested in Leogane in February 2008 during a pilot phase before being finalised in agreement with UNIFEM staff.

A deliberate choice was made not to attempt to target victims of violence during the course of the research since the sensitivity of the issue requires appropriately adapted research techniques and a longer period of time than allowed for here. Moreover, this approach has been used recently elsewhere (see, for instance, Larrain and Fernández, 2007, and Panos Caraïbes, 2007) and it was not felt necessary to repeat the work here. It is also important to note that while men can also be the victim of sexual and physical violence, discussion of this phenomenon has been left to other studies. Only 1% of the victims recorded by URAMEL (2004) are male.

On the basis of the information gathered, data analysis was carried out using a series of key headings chosen to coincide with the research questions.

Triangulation of results has been achieved through:

- Comparing the results obtained with those in other sources, eg. IDB study or EMMUS data
- Use of diverse participants in the FGDs and IDIs
- Use of several complementary methodologies with different strengths and weaknesses
- Inviting stakeholders to give their reaction to the report's key findings before the final document was produced
- Using a research team with varied profiles for the field work<sup>3</sup>. The team exchanged observations and interpretation of data during and after the field work.

### **3.2 Strengths and limitations of the methodology**

Strengths of the methodology used were:

- Most key actors in the field of violence reduction and SGBV have been interviewed and an adequate number of focus groups were organised to provide a reasonable view of the situation prevailing in much of the country.

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<sup>3</sup> A Creole-speaking outsider, female, with a sociological/development management background; a Haitian agronomist with extensive field work experience, also female; a Haitian male *animateur* with considerable experience of development projects. The latter facilitated two focus groups with men from Plaisance and Fort Liberté. His presence was an attempt to reduce any bias introduced into the process by having an all-female team for the other focus group discussions with men. In reality, no significant difference in the content of the FGDs was observed when comparing facilitation by a man with that of a woman.

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- The logical development of the discussion in the focus groups helped some of the participants carry out some basic analysis, leading towards discussion of solutions to the problems identified. As a result, it prompted increased motivation to take action designed to tackle violence against women.

Some of the weaknesses of the methodology were:

- There is a certain imbalance in the two outcomes defined for the project in as far as there are relatively few activities – either nationally or those planned by UNIFEM – that correspond to the first of them. On the assumption that the two are equally important, the methodology was therefore designed to elicit information about both, while the actual material gathered was very heavily weighted towards the second outcome. An initial focus on the second outcome alone might have helped direct some of the enquiry more accurately. As a result, there was a tendency to focus on physical and sexual violence at the expense of other pervasive forms of violence which were of concern to women, notably economic violence.
- Because FGD participants were generally invited via the local partner organisations, which are known to have an interest in SGBV, they often had a higher level of awareness about SGBV than might be expected among the community at large (this is applicable for both the women and the men). Consequently, their attitudes cannot always be seen to be typical of the wider population.
- The Venn Diagram exercise was not always successful in terms of mapping institutions active in each area. Although it offered insights into participants' perceptions of certain actors, lack of information or misconceptions about the role of various organisations prevented an accurate picture from developing. The technique might be more useful in a training session where time would be given to exploring the role of each institution, filling in the gaps and analysing strategies for developing alliances with relevant bodies.



- A certain delay in completing this report occurred due to the adverse personal circumstances of the chief consultant
- The second half of the study took place during a period of transition, pending the nomination of a new Prime Minister and cabinet. For this reason, certain on-going initiatives have been put on hold and a number of state officials felt unable to commit themselves clearly to future actions or time-tables for implementation.

#### **4. Knowledge to date**

##### **4.1 Quantitative data**

There is very little quantitative information about the level of violence in Haiti<sup>4</sup>. It has not proved possible to obtain any data from the Haitian National Police or MINUSTAH giving figures of reported crime, despite the fact that data is said to be held at the Investigations Bureau of the DCPJ (judicial police department). Some limited data is available in the form of information gathered by monitors working with the Commission Episcopale Justice et Paix regarding violent deaths in Port-au-Prince. Their figures indicate that men have a significantly greater chance of dying a violent death than women and are summarised in the table below.

**Table 1: Numbers of violent deaths in Port-au-Prince recorded by Justice et Paix from Jan 2004-Mar 2007**

Overall total		2004		2005		2006		Jan-Mar 2007	
Total	Of which women	Total	Of which women	Total	Of which women	Total	Of which women	Total	Of which women
<b>2366</b>	<b>112 (4.75%)</b>	887	48	796	64	539	38	144	16

Source: figures compiled by author from <http://www.forumcitoyen.org.ht/jilap>

With regard to kidnappings, the ICG (2008) quotes MINUSTAH figures for the numbers of reported cases that have taken place since 2006, see Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Numbers of cases of kidnappings reported to MINUSTAH 2006-June 2008**

2006	2007	2008 (Jan-June)
500	237	162

Source: MINUSTAH figures quoted in ICG (2008)<sup>5</sup>

Viva Rio and Quisqueya University have recently completed a victimisation survey of the Greater Bel Air area<sup>6</sup> which looked at the local population's recent experience of crime and violence. It shows

<sup>4</sup> However, UNDP is in the process of carrying out a number of victimisation surveys. The first of these, carried out in Cite Soleil, is currently at the stage of data compilation.

<sup>5</sup> Some cases involve several victims; not all cases are reported.

that 77% of the population (75% of women and 81% of men) avoid going out at night in order to prevent themselves being targeted for violence, while 16% of women and 11% of men take care when going outside at any time. Nonetheless, actual levels of crime are shown to have fallen considerably in 2006 when compared to the previous 3 years, presumably because of the resumption of state control over the area. Only 14.3% of those surveyed had experienced attacks by bandits or thieves in 2006, for instance, as compared with 43-44% over 2003-5. This, it is suggested, points to a link between collective violence and inter-personal violence since the former creates the necessary conditions for the latter.

It is notable that a relatively small number of women declared that they had been subject to physical and sexual violence when compared with other statistical data discussed below. This may be attributable to a number of methodological issues (the nature of the questions, training of interviewers, etc) that were not designed to ensure that SGBV is addressed with adequate sensitivity.

**Table 3: Percent of men and women who have been victim of certain crimes over the last year in the Greater Bel Air area**

	Men (%)	Women (%)	Total
Non-violent theft	25.5	17.4	21
Theft using violence or threat of violence	17.8	11.3	14.3
Physical aggression	15	6.2	10.3
Assassination of family member	6	6.9	6.5
Sexual violence	1	2	1
Kidnapping of a family member	2	4	3

Source: Viva Rio/Quisqueya University Victimization Survey, 2007

Two household demographic surveys have been conducted in Haiti that attempt to measure the prevalence of certain forms of violence against women<sup>7</sup>. The following table presents the results obtained in relation to domestic violence:

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<sup>6</sup> Such a survey is based on people's experience of crime, as opposed to official figures of reported crime. The survey was part of a larger census of the area, which covers Bel Air, Corridor Bastia, Fort National, Delmas 2, La Saline, Fortouron, Pont Rouge and part of Solino. The full report is not yet available. This data is taken from a powerpoint presentation made at the Institut Interuniversitaire de recherche et de développement, Port-au-Prince on 1 September 2008

<sup>7</sup> Other studies, such as CHREPROF (1996), which found that 70% of women surveyed had been a victim of violence, have also attempted to measure rates of violence against women. Sampling/methodological differences are probably responsible for the different rates obtained.

**Table 4: Prevalence of certain forms of violence against women in Haiti based on most recent EMMUS household demographic surveys**

	<b>EMMUS III (2000)</b>	<b>EMMUS IV (2005-06)</b>
% of women who have suffered any kind of violence by their partner	30	25
% who have suffered physical violence by their partner	18	14
% who have suffered sexual violence by their partner	17	11

Source: EMMUS III and EMMUS IV

To the extent that these figures are directly comparable, they appear to show a slight fall in the prevalence of domestic violence over the period between the two surveys. However, the reason for this fall is not clear and it is important to note that even in quantitative surveys subjective elements can influence the results, particularly in relation to sensitive questions of this type. The downward trend would need to be confirmed by further surveys or studies before any conclusion can confidently be drawn (the EMMUS surveys take place every 5 years, with the next planned for 2010).

The other main source of quantitative data is that collected by various organisations active in the struggle to end violence against women. This information is not based on a representative sample but instead reflects the number of cases of victims seeking support and redress. The fact that these figures show an increase does not therefore necessarily mean that the problem is becoming more serious but instead indicates that more women are prepared to come forward. In interviews, the representatives of several of these organisations stated that they believe the increased number of cases to be due to women's increased confidence in the ability of the system to give a satisfactory outcome. This, in turn, is the result of the publicity given to a number of cases of SGBV that have recently come to court and which have ended in the perpetrator being imprisoned for considerable periods of time.

**Table 5: Number of rape cases 2003-07 as recorded by 4 institutions based in Port-au-Prince involved in care and treatment of victims of SGBV**

	<b>SOFA</b>	<b>Kay Fanm</b>	<b>GHEKIO</b>	<b>MSF F</b>
<b>2003</b>	13	30	58	n/a
<b>2004</b>	55	55	70	n/a
<b>2005</b>	112	188	261	109
<b>2006</b>	152	133	534	237
<b>2007</b>	155	202	389 <sup>8</sup>	157 <sup>9</sup>

Source: Larrain and Fernandez (2007), URAMEL (2007), reports from Kay Fanm and SOFA

Kay Fanm, SOFA and URAMEL have all highlighted the large proportion of cases of rape committed against minors, some as young as 6 or 7 years old, which constitute a majority of cases of sexual violence received by them. Collective rape (ie. an act committed by several rapists during the course of a single attack) accounts for a smaller but nonetheless significant proportion of cases.

<sup>8</sup> Figures for 2007 are for first quarter only

<sup>9</sup> Ditto

**Table 6: Percentage of rape against minors and of collective rape as a proportion of all rape cases recorded by SOFA, Kay Fanm, URAMEL and MCFDF**

	SOFA		Kay Fanm		URAMEL	MCFDF
	2006	2007	2006	2007	Feb 02 – Oct 05	Year not specified
Rape of minors as proportion of all rape cases received (%)	51	53	64	25	55.4	65
Collective rape as proportion of all rape cases received (%)	15	22	29	23.5	n/a	29

Source: Annual and bi-annual reports from SOFA and Kay Fanm, URAMEL (2007), République d’Haïti (2008)

For further details on data collection systems, see Section 8 of the report.

#### **4.2 Qualitative data**

An important recent study by Larrain and Fernandez (2007), using the Critical Route methodology, examined various aspects of women’s experience when they attempt to find redress for situations of violence within the family or of sexual violence. Among their key findings were the following:

- Levels of violence are high within society and the family, particularly domestic violence and rape (7-9 families out of every 10 were said by participants to suffer some form of violence); psychological violence and sexual violence within the context of a relationship are not necessarily recognised as violence, whereas the failure of fathers to pay for their children’s upkeep is seen as a serious form of violence.
- Certain myths and stereotypes about violence deter victims from coming forward (eg. women’s behaviour can be responsible for provoking violence, through their form of dress, infidelity or failure to care adequately for their partner), thereby contributing to their stigmatisation by the community
- The causes of violence can be attributed to both social factors (poverty and lack of education) and institutional factors (the paucity of the institutional response that encourages impunity).
- The services offered by women’s organisations aimed at accompanying women who are victims of violence are highly valued by those who have turned to them for help. This perception, together with family support, help encourage women seeking assistance to come forward. Religious beliefs, fear about stigmatisation and a desire to preserve family relationships, on the other hand, tend to prevent them turning to outside institutions.
- There is a consensus about the course of action to be taken in cases of sexual violence but less so in terms of domestic violence. Even among institutions that offer support to victims of SGBV, there is a tendency to promote informal settlements, particularly in the case of

domestic violence. This, it is argued, can be explained in part by the ineffectiveness of state services and the consequent high rates of impunity.

- Not enough attention is given to preventive measures, notably those that tackle the cultural aspects that legitimise violence against women. Greater attention therefore needs to be given to working with men on masculine identity and its links with violence and subordination of women.
- Too many resources are concentrated in Port-au-Prince at the expense of providing support to women in isolated rural areas. Moreover, at the time of the study, there was both a lack of coordination among the various institutions working on SGBV and a lack of resources and training for those engaged in the response
- The lack of any specific legal framework for tackling violence against women is a handicap when it comes to seeking legal redress, particularly when it comes to addressing psychological violence.

The work of Loutis (2006) into the situation of women in Haiti's armed violence provides a valuable typology of some of the actors in the recent collective violence in urban areas<sup>10</sup>, although the evolution in the national security context may have rendered some of its content out of date, while some of the detail is highly specific to local dynamics. Nonetheless, it is worth bearing in mind two of her conclusions, firstly, that it is important to differentiate between the nature of the different groups, and secondly, that there are numerically relatively few active armed groups.

Loutis also argues that it is important to avoid perceiving women simply as victims and highlights their active involvement in some of this violence, albeit often on the basis of dependency on men. Groups of armed women have been involved with rape (of men and women) and extortion, as well as using violence (particularly sticks, knives and other sharp instruments) to strike at bandits attacking their home areas. Likewise, they give support to local men engaged in conflict with other areas and provide information. At the same time, women are also shown to have used their influence to intervene with the leaders of certain groups in defence of some of the victims.

The same study also stresses the stigmatisation of some rape victims and the risk that other female members of the same family may be tarred by the same brush, forcing them to leave their homes. The report concludes with a recommendation that it is important to strengthen social capital and levels of organisation – particularly but not exclusively that of women - as a means of reducing the potential for violence in the future.

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<sup>10</sup> Her study focused on the towns of Gonaives, Les Cayes and three areas within Port-au-Prince (Bel Air, Martissant and Carrefour Feuilles).

## **5. Recent experience of the movement to end violence against women in Haiti**

The women's movement in Haiti has steadily gained strength and become increasingly well coordinated since the mid-1980s, when a number of today's most active women's NGOs came into being as part of the broader movement for social change and democracy<sup>11</sup>. Since 2002, several of these organisations have come together as CONAP (National Coordinating Body for Women's Rights) in an attempt to influence legislation in parliament in relation to the rights of women.

Two years later, a particularly important example of collaboration between state, civil society and international agencies was initiated through the creation of the Concertation Nationale, a joint body bringing together state institutions, international organisations, and local civil society in the fight against violence against women<sup>12</sup>. This unique coordinating body has enabled institutions operating in different spheres of public life to join forces and achieve significant progress towards their shared goal. Their combined efforts have resulted in the adoption of a National Strategic Plan for ending violence against women, which all its members are expected to help achieve through their individual programmes. An outcome of this increasingly effective approach has been the adoption of a landmark decree in 2005 which transformed rape into a more serious offense and increased the penalty to be applied by the courts. The Concertation Nationale has also produced a number of tools for use by the various institutions involved, notably a protocol for the care of victims of violence and an inter-ministerial agreement concerning the issue of a free medical certificate for women who have suffered SGBV (see also Section 8.1). Efforts have also been made towards developing a single data collection system (see Section 9) and implementing a joint campaign for the prevention of violence.

Although these are very significant achievements which have contributed towards establishing more effective mechanisms for tackling the problem of violence against women, progress has been uneven and obstacles remain. There is no central budget for implementing the National Plan and at present there is no unified monitoring system which would enable more systematic tracking of how effectively certain results are being achieved throughout the country. Nor is there a clear timetable for achieving the Plan's objectives. Instead, progress has to be measured through the sum of the achievements of the different institutions involved, accepting that there are likely to be gaps where service-providers are absent or relatively weak. One key informant stressed that the Concertation Nationale is engaged in a process, involving the gradual building of the necessary institutional framework to end violence against women, and that although this approach is sometimes slow, it is nonetheless sustainable<sup>13</sup>.

It is worth noting that Haiti ratified the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (known as the Convention Belem do Para) in 1996 and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1981. In its first report to the committee overseeing progress towards CEDAW's implementation submitted in March 2008, the government presented an overview of the issue of violence against

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<sup>11</sup> These include SOFA and Kay Famn, which extend their activities through several regions of the country, as well as AFASDA in the North and Famn Deside Jakmel in the South East

<sup>12</sup> State representatives include the MCFDF, MSPP, MJSP; international agencies represented include UNFPA, UNIFEM and MINUSTAH

<sup>13</sup> IDI with Dr Marjorie Joseph, URAMEL

women in Haiti under Article 6 relating to the suppression of all forms of trafficking and exploitation of women. This cites initiatives undertaken by the Concertation Nationale and civil society organisations but fails to make any clear commitments in terms of action to be taken by the state authorities.

## **6. Perceptions of violence and gender relations**

### **6.1 Types and frequency of violence encountered**

#### **6.1.1 General Violence**

Other than various forms of violence against women explored in greater detail in the following section, theft/robbery was the most common form of violence mentioned in the focus groups by both men and women. Women are particularly targeted when on their way to buy goods for their trading activities, which is made worse by the fact that they have sometimes had to borrow the money. Inter-personal violence (fighting, destruction of property as a means of inflicting harm on someone by burning down their home or destroying their crops or possessions) is said by participants to happen not just between men but also between women. Reference was also made to the practice of members of rival *rara* groups<sup>14</sup> fighting each other, as also sometimes occurs between supporters of competing rap groups. Murder, particularly in the case, of land conflicts, was not said to be common but was raised on several occasions. Verbal abuse/insults/threats<sup>15</sup> were frequently mentioned as a regular occurrence between members of the same sex as well as the opposite sex, sometimes extending to unfounded public accusation of wrong-doing. Various forms of structural violence (eg. hunger, unemployment, failure to send children to school) were also frequently mentioned. In a few cases, violence against children (*restavek*<sup>16</sup> in particular) and animals was raised as issues of concern, although in other instances participants (women included) were prepared to defend limited use of corporal punishment in order to teach children discipline<sup>17</sup>.

Armed violence was seen as a significant issue in Carrefour, Leogane and, more recently, in Plaisance, but less so in La Vallée and Fort Liberté. Kidnapping was said to be a problem in Carrefour and, very recently, in Plaisance as a result of victims being brought to the area from Cap Haitien. However, in Carrefour, police violence (illegal arrests, beatings and harassment) was raised as particularly serious in certain areas with a reputation for banditry (eg. Lamentin). Police intervention tends to occur after a particular incident, by which time the people responsible have fled, leaving the entire population of the neighbourhood to become victims because of the stigma attached to being from these areas<sup>18</sup>. Most of the women said that they had had tear gas in their homes. *'The police get you out of bed ... sometimes you have to lie down in the mud ... they beat you up, arrest you, then you have to pay up before you're released.'* Men are the primary targets but women and even

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<sup>14</sup> Traditional marching bands that operate during the Lenten period, covering large distances on foot

<sup>15</sup> The men in Carrefour added that these threats include the use of the supernatural (*kout poud*) as well as sending someone to 'sort out' the other person. It is interesting however, that participants mentioned the importance of having someone to back you up as serving as a deterrent to potential aggressors. People who do not enjoy such support are, especially the young, are seen as more vulnerable.

<sup>16</sup> Unpaid child domestic workers

<sup>17</sup> One woman in Fort Liberté said that since MINUSTAH says that violence towards children is an offence, she hits her children so often that she ought to go to prison every day of the year.

<sup>18</sup> According to one of the men *'if you come from that area, they'll beat you up. They say that if that's where you live, you must deserve a beating, otherwise, you'd live somewhere else'*.

children are also caught up in this arbitrary repression. Naturally enough, this experience is linked to a distinct lack of trust in the police that was greater than in other areas. Both the women and men in Carrefour complained that the police can often be seen with some of the people believed to be responsible for violence.

*'Some of the bandi [armed bandits] work for the police. If you see the police shake hands with them, you can't report them. If they're arrested and then they're released, they might come after you. You have to bite your tongue and put up with them.'*

Unsurprisingly, therefore, it is women in Carrefour who expressed the greatest sense of insecurity<sup>19</sup>. They explained that they hide under their beds with their children when they hear shooting. *'It makes you feel stressed. You get high blood pressure. You're always afraid'*, one explained, while another said that *'it's only the Good Lord and those you can't see [spirits] who can protect you'*. In order to avoid being robbed, women prefer to make several trips to the market rather than take enough money to buy all the goods in one go.

Certain other forms of violence can be associated with the characteristics of the areas visited, such as:

- In Plaisance, women raised the problem of young girls trafficked to the Dominican Republic
- in Fort Liberte, abuse by the authorities on both sides of the near-by border with the Dominican Republic (extortion, shooting, etc) was described as systematic<sup>20</sup>.
- In Carrefour, women complained about the local authorities who confiscate street sellers' goods
- In Léogane, drugs (pills known as *ti polis* or *siwo* [honey] are said to have been used to make women submit to sex.

## **6.1.2 Violence against women**

### **6.1.2.1 Types and frequency of SGBV**

Examples of sexual (rape, both individual and collective), physical (beatings, particularly men beating up women, and killings), psychological (insults<sup>21</sup>, threats and humiliation, sexual harassment at work) and economic violence (structural violence, men's failure to contribute to their children's upkeep) were provided in all of the areas visited. Participants in focus groups told stories of young girls raped by religious ministers or pressured into sex by teachers and of women being beaten so badly that they have to drink through straws. SOFA registered 4 cases of murder by women's partners over the period Jan-June 2007.

In Carrefour, some of the women were particularly open about their experience of domestic violence and their partners' attempts to control their movements. Men, they said, do not want women to go out to dances because they say that they are unable to control their own

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<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, fear affects inhabitants of other areas, particularly those that live close to a main road. Even in relatively peaceful La Vallee, one of the women claimed to fear going to sleep in case someone might break in and kill her, although most of the participants in rural areas acknowledged that they were better off than people in the capital.

<sup>20</sup> There is ample evidence of this type of abuse that has been collected by organisations such as GARR, the Groupe d'appui aux réfugiés et rapatriés

<sup>21</sup> Such abuse is felt bitterly. One woman wanted to give insults a ranking of 20 out of 5, it happens so often. *'I feel humiliated'*, she said, *'women don't respect others just like themselves'*.

possessiveness, while one of the women explained that her partner does not want her to talk on the telephone. Whereas not all the women are prepared to put up with violence (*'if a man so much as pinches me, you've no idea what I may do'*, said one), another had been beaten up by her husband because he had seen her talking to another man. *'He tore my skirt in the street. I was ashamed. I used to feel alive. I don't any more. He won't leave and I can't because I have a child with him'*<sup>22</sup>.

In line with the findings of Larrain and Fernandez (2007), domestic (physical) violence and rape were the two forms of violence against women most systematically evoked by participants, although psychological violence was also raised by most groups (both by men against women, women against men and between women) as was economic violence. In the latter case, women tended to insist on the consequences of paternal irresponsibility (men, they say, use their money to support women other than their wife/partner or deny their paternity of a child) while the men pointed to broader structural violence (lack of access to basic entitlements such as education, employment and productive assets, etc).

In addition, the women mentioned several forms of discrimination, which they considered to be violence, particularly in employment. Participants explained that it is not uncommon, for instance, for women to have to submit to sex in order to be offered or keep a job. The men in Carrefour, on the other hand, denounced a tendency by *hougan* (voudou priests) to use their position to exert psychological pressure on women in order to oblige them to have sex with them on the pretext that they are communing with the spirits<sup>23</sup>. They also discussed a practice – seemingly not uncommon – whereby men deliberately make a woman pregnant before leaving her to punish her for something she has done<sup>24</sup>.

It was domestic violence - and to a lesser extent economic violence - that the women most eagerly wanted to discuss. This does not seem to be because of taboos around sexual violence (there was no reluctance to discuss that issue), but because it is evidently so widespread. Physical violence by a partner is considered extremely common by women in all 5 areas: they all ranked it as a maximum of 5 out of 5 in terms of frequency (see Table 6 below). *'It should be more like 55 instead of just 5'*, said one woman in La Vallée. The men – with the exception of those in Plaisance – tended to agree with the assessment that beatings of this kind are very common.

Unsurprisingly, the women also view violent abuse by partners to be extremely serious, a point which is less readily accepted by the men. Although the discussion around the score to be given to the seriousness of the practice pushed men into admitting that physical violence by men towards their partners is damaging, their debate revealed considerable ambiguities towards this issue. In each group there were men who were inclined to condemn such violent acts, but others tended to

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<sup>22</sup> An interesting counterpoint to this statement comes from a participant in Plaisance who stated that *'I left my husband because he hit me. I used to get beaten up badly. Now I feel alive.'*

<sup>23</sup> It is important to note that several of the men are themselves *hougan*.

<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that, according to the men in Carrefour, men in homosexual relationships reproduce the violence found in heterosexual relationships, whereby a dominant man will beat his partner.

find ways of justifying men's violence towards their partners in terms of women's own behaviour<sup>25</sup> (see Section 6.3).

In all 5 areas, rape was found to be less common than domestic violence but is nonetheless seen to be a recurring problem, ranking 3 or 4 out of 5 in most groups with the interesting exception of Carrefour. There, whilst not denying its existence, the women claimed that it is uncommon<sup>26</sup>. The men tended to concur when being asked to assess the seriousness of sexual violence, at least when committed by strangers, but certain comments nonetheless reveal confusion about how women offer their consent to sex. *'Some women are like that. You have to force them and then they end up agreeing. They're capricious. In that case, it's not violence. My friends say that a lot of women are like that.'*<sup>27</sup>

While some of the men in the focus groups understood the concept of marital rape, others did not. As one man in Carrefour explained *'according to our mentality, we don't tend to consider it rape. If a woman doesn't want sex, the partner thinks it's because she's sleeping with another man'*.

Most key informants and focus group participants agree that even though women are more willing to come forward nowadays, most cases of violence are never declared to outside institutions. Women remain reluctant to come forward for a variety of reasons: shame, fear of reprisal, unwillingness to break up their family unit, economic dependence on the perpetrator, and a lack of trust in the ability of state institutions (police and court system) to act in their interest.

Research participants explained that women can be stigmatised if it becomes known that they have been a victim of sexual violence. Families will sometimes hold the victim herself responsible for adopting compromising behaviour and refuse to support them, which can make it hard for younger women to raise cases of sexual assault with their parents. The perpetrators themselves also try to intimidate the woman by mocking or threatening her. In other cases, victims' children can be taunted at school if the case becomes widely known and the 'stain' of such an attack can make it hard for a woman to find another partner. Such attitudes can lead to self-hatred and suicidal thoughts on the part of the victim<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> The men in Carrefour were significantly less tolerant of domestic violence. This is probably attributable to the fact that they come from a relatively high socio-economic group and are all close to FOVIS, the organisation which issued the invitation, and so had a somewhat different profile to the men in the other groups.

<sup>26</sup> The women ranked rape as only 1 out of 5 in terms of its frequency, while the men in the same area (who largely had a higher socio-economic profile) ranked it higher at 3 out of 5. Could the downplaying of rape by these women when compared to other groups be evidence of the sometimes heard assertion that rape is not always recognised as such in Haitian society once a woman is sexually active? Are the relatively high numbers of adolescents reported as being rape victims due to the fact that they tend to be more frequently targeted or that their rape is considered more serious? Or is it simply a reflection of the greater social constraints facing older women? No clear evidence emerged through this study to support the first hypothesis but the response of the women in Carrefour remains a curious anomaly.

<sup>27</sup> Male participant in focus group held in Plaisance.

<sup>28</sup> IDI with representatives of KOFVIV

**Table 7: Frequency and seriousness of rape and domestic violence as ranked by focus group participants in each of the 5 localities**

Locality	Women's ranking			Men's ranking		
		Frequency	Seriousness		Frequency	Seriousness
Palmiste Avin, Léogane <sup>29</sup> (West)						
	Domestic violence	1st	2nd	Domestic violence	1st	3rd
	Rape	3rd	1 <sup>st</sup>	Rape	Not listed	Not listed
La Vallée de Jacmel (South East)		Frequency	Seriousness		Frequency	Seriousness
	Domestic violence	5	4.5	Domestic violence	5	5
	Rape	3	5	Rape	1	5
Carrefour (West)		Frequency	Seriousness		Frequency	Seriousness
	Domestic violence	5	5	Domestic violence	5	5
	Rape	1	3	Rape	3	5
Plaisance (North)		Frequency	Seriousness		Frequency	Seriousness
	Domestic violence	5	5	Domestic violence	4 <sup>th</sup> <sup>30</sup>	data unavailable
	Rape	4	5	Rape	5 <sup>th</sup>	data unavailable
Fort Liberté (North East)		Frequency	Seriousness		Frequency	Seriousness
	Domestic violence	5	5	Domestic violence	4	4
	Rape	4	4	Rape	3	5

(scale = 1-5, with the lowest score being the least serious and the highest the most serious)

In other cases, particularly those involving domestic violence, women want their partner to be taught a lesson but do not want him to be sent to prison. Members of the police and *juge de paix*<sup>31</sup> met in the course of the study explained how women ask them to exert moral pressure but often fail to return if formal proceedings are suggested. This is particularly common where women have children with the man concerned, since they may be dependent on him for food and other basic needs. Women are also reluctant to break up a family, believing that if they did take a man to court they could never return to him after taking such action. It is this reluctance by women to come forward that is frequently cited by officials as one of the chief barriers to prosecuting more cases of SGBV.

Collective rape concerns a minority, but nonetheless significant number of cases and was mentioned in all the areas visited, even though in some it was considered exceptional. The phenomenon is serious enough to be given a name, although the phrase used varies from one region to another. Terms encountered include: *pase kare, gede, tren, kantè, ji*. On several occasions mention was made of cases where women who have agreed to sexual contact with one man then find that they

<sup>29</sup> The ranking system used was different to that used elsewhere. Types of violence were ranked in positions (as opposed to a score of 1-5, used elsewhere).

<sup>30</sup> Ditto

<sup>31</sup> Judge at the lowest level of the legal system, magistrate

have been tricked into a situation where friends join him without her consent<sup>32</sup>. Up to 10 men can be involved. In other cases, such as in Les Cayes and formerly in parts of Port-au-Prince (Martissant and Delmas), groups of young men exist just to carry out rapes of this kind, kidnapping women or breaking into their houses for this purpose (Loutis, 2006 and IDI with Kay Famn).

The President of the CNDDR acknowledges cases where rape and assault on women have been used as tools of revenge by rival gangs, an assertion with which the MCFDF agrees when it points to the 'generalisation of sexual violence as an arm of oppression'<sup>33</sup> and which appears to be backed up by ample documentation collected by various organisations such as SOFA and Kay Famn. However, on the basis of the discussions held in preparation of this study, it would appear that this form of gang rape, associated with collective and political violence experienced at certain points in Haiti's recent history, is less common today. Instead, a more insidious form, committed in particular in rural areas and directed towards young women perceived to be adopting 'loose' behaviour (on the basis of their dress or the fact that they go out alone at night), is worryingly widespread. This finding coincides with the work carried out by Loutis (2006) which identifies groups of teenage boys specialising in collective rape in Les Cayes as a means of exerting social control.

Finally, it is important to draw attention to the sexual violence committed by MINUSTAH personnel, which is particularly shocking given that the troops' presence in the country is justified on the basis of their contribution to the country as peacekeepers. Although no examples were raised by participants in any of the areas visited during the field work for this study, such cases have been denounced by women's organisations and have resulted in disciplinary measures taken by the UN. For example, 111 Sri Lankan soldiers were sent home in response to allegations of repeated abuse but the Haitian state still continues to call for a more active role in ensuring that adequate sanctions are taken to punish such serious cases<sup>34</sup>.

#### **6.1.2.2 Factors that make women vulnerable to SGBV**

URAMEL's statistics describe the 'typical' victim of violence as an unmarried woman, aged 25. However, this is an aggregate portrait and, as other institutions point out, all women of varied age and socio-economic profiles are subject to SGBV. There is legitimate concern about the number of young (teenage) victims, who are considered to be vulnerable by virtue of the tasks they are asked to carry out (carrying water, running errands, etc) and their inexperience. Participants in FGD supplied a number of examples of such cases. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind the continued taboo that surrounds the reporting of both sexual and domestic violence and there are certain indications that older women are still more reluctant to come forward than their younger counterparts. In the light of information compiled by URAMEL, the perpetrators, on the other hand, tend to be adult men who, in many cases, are known to the victim<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Some key informants suggested that this is linked to a form of prostitution or transactional sex.

<sup>33</sup> 'Pour une sécurité et une paix intégrant les droits des femmes y compris les opérations de paix', MCFDF mimeo

<sup>34</sup> Ditto

<sup>35</sup> Women know their aggressors in 41% of cases (URAMEL, 2007)

There is broad consistency in the information provided by key informants and women participating in the FGDs about the times when violence is most widespread. Carnival<sup>36</sup> and the *rara* season were regularly cited, as were the main holiday periods (July-August and end of year celebrations) as well as patron saints' days (*fet champet*). This was explained chiefly by the fact that alcohol is widely used at such times, and women are obliged to travel home from social gatherings late at night without public transport being available. In order to clamp down on SGBV at such times, the MCFDF organised a special campaign to coincide with this year's Carnival in Port-au-Prince under the slogan 'Respekte kò m se diyite m' (To respect my body is to respect my dignity). This aimed to address the links between gender stereotypes, sexist advertising and gender based violence. Public attorneys were also put on call during the festivities in order to ensure a swift response to all violent incidents.

URAMEL data on sexual violence in Port-au-Prince (URAMEL, 2007) indicates that 50% of cases occur in private homes (33% of cases in the victim's home; 17% in that of the aggressor), with a further 24% occurring in the street. Recently, many cases of kidnapping of women have been accompanied by rape. Participants in FGDs, however, stressed women's vulnerability outside the home at night, and when on their way to the market (when they might be expected to have money on their person). Most frequently, women talked of cases where women are targeted when coming home from dances or other evening entertainment. Women engaged in commerce in Fort Liberte also stressed their vulnerability when using public transport, although interestingly the rates of robbery on the road have fallen as a result of the recent repairs because vehicles travel more quickly. Another factor that tends to facilitate violent crime and assaults is the lack of public lighting due to the poor electricity supply, as men in Carrefour pointed out.

## **6.2 Economic factors**

Poverty and women's lack of income create a situation of dependency on men that binds them to their partners and tends to oblige them to put up with domestic violence. As Dr Marjorie Joseph from URAMEL explained, *'when women have no economic power, they stay in violent relationships'* (see also section 5.1 above). A female participant in the focus group in Plaisance agreed, saying *'I put up with it because he's the one that's feeding my children'*, while another woman in Fort Liberte added *'We suffer, especially women who don't work. If he gives you some small change, he thinks he can do what he wants with you'*.

The same factors of economic hardship are widely blamed for being at the root of much violent behaviour by men. Male participants in focus groups describe a level of frustration that arises when women pressure them to provide things that they have no money to buy. At the same time, in several focus groups, women describe how men tend to ridicule their inability to contribute to the household's meagre income, belittling them by calling them *'worthless'* or names such as *'atagaz'* (an accusatory label signifying that the women have so few resources they cannot even contribute towards the small cost of buying kerosene for lamps). In this sense, the lack of a monetary value given to women's heavy burden of domestic labour (washing, cleaning, child-rearing, cooking, etc) seems to contribute to men's disrespect for the role played by women.

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<sup>36</sup> A 3-day event that takes place 40 days before Lent

Focus groups participants also described how women's lack of economic opportunities (but also their desire to obtain material goods that are socially valued, such as mobile telephones) pushes them look to men to provide for them. This is then interpreted by men as provocative behaviour (inappropriate dress, etc), which in turn is used to legitimise violence. Some focus group participants suggested that this trend is made worse by a lack of parental control, particularly since the parents are unable to provide adequately for their children.

### **6.3 Social factors**

Strong, but shifting, social norms as well as gender roles and identities seem to form the basis of various attitudes that are used to justify violence by men towards women. As well as poverty, men cite what they consider to be inappropriate behaviour by women as reasons why they, or their peers, commit violence towards women. They frequently highlight a number of factors such as women's infidelity (*'Women don't respect you. They take other men. You're working and sweating away and she's unfaithful.'*<sup>37</sup>), their failure to treat their partners appropriately (not preparing food or agreeing to sexual relations), or the way that they dress<sup>38</sup> (*'they go around half-naked'*) as reasons for beatings or assault.

Such perceptions, which echo those encountered by Larrain and Fernandez (2007), are pervasive. In a case study put forward to men in Léogane of a young girl who was abused by her uncle in the house where she was living, there was much discussion as to whether the girl might have incited his behaviour. *'There's no smoke without fire'*, said one. In La Vallee, one young man, who accepted that women now have equal rights, was clearly resentful of this change because he seemed to feel it diminished his own status. For similar reasons, some of the men in Plaisance look to a men's group (GAKODA) to provide them with assistance, although in reality GAKODA's mandate is - like that of AHDESE - to engage men as champions in the fight against gender based violence rather than serving as a organization to defend the rights of men.

*'Even if the man is in the right, people always listen to the woman. Women can always go to AFASDA but men don't have anywhere to go.'*

Various key informants emphasised men's dominant role in Haitian society, despite formal equality in the eyes of the law.

*'Society gives men authority over women. Any man in the street thinks he has power over any woman. They beat women to keep them in their place'*<sup>39</sup>.

*'Women are considered sexual objects, private goods that are there to satisfy men. If a man wants a woman, he feels that he can take her any way he wants.'*<sup>40</sup>

Haiti's report to the committee overseeing CEDAW states that men are given the right to control their partners, which can sometimes lead to domestic violence (République d'Haïti, 2008). Representatives from KOFVIV talked of the men being the cocks and women the little chicks as a way of illustrating that men feel they are in charge and are free to give orders. It is useful here to

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<sup>37</sup> Focus group participant in La Vallee

<sup>38</sup> On several occasions, among the steps to be taken to restrict violence against women participants suggested education to ensure that women dress more decently, including one police woman

<sup>39</sup> IDI with Olga Benoit, SOFA

<sup>40</sup> IDI with Yolette Jeanty, Kay Famn

recall the historical context described by Panos (2007) and used by the MCFDF in its work on gender stereotypes and violence during the carnival season (work supported by UNIFEM). During the colonial era, women's bodies did not belong to themselves, with rape and physical abuse being an inherent part of the lives of female slaves. It would appear that this experience has left a strong legacy on gender relations in the country.



As is to be expected, in some cases women have been socialised into accepting this domination. One older focus group participant expressed the view that women should make an effort to avoid behaviour that is likely to provoke their husbands. Another female focus group participant in Leogane explained that women have low self-esteem and do not necessarily believe that they are equal. Nonetheless, in most instances, the women met during the field work are acutely aware of the discrimination they face and that men fail to respect what they do. *'You work hard, you wash, you iron, then the man says 'what have you been doing all day?', then he accuses you of sleeping in'*<sup>41</sup>.

## **7. Existing mechanisms for controlling violence**

### **7.1 State-led approaches**

Prior to the transitional government that was put in place following the overthrow of President Aristide in early 2004, there were no state-led violence prevention or reduction programmes operating in Haiti. The use of force to ensure peace and security was the exclusive responsibility of the police and justice system, and during an earlier period the army<sup>42</sup>. At the same time, the impunity enjoyed by figures in authority and the absence of any state presence in many rural areas have meant that justice has seemed out of reach for most sections of the population.

<sup>41</sup> Female participant in focus group in La Vallée

<sup>42</sup> it is worth noting that for much of the country's history various illegal parallel bodies have acted as auxiliaries to the state's repressive apparatus. These have been known variously as *tonton macoutes*, FRAPH or *attachés*, See 'Retour en Force du Phénomène d'Attachés : la NCHR crie au désastre', press release dated 1/9/03, on [www.rnddh.org](http://www.rnddh.org) consulted on 27/7/08

However, with the emergence of armed groups with strong political allegiance – often to the then-President himself – and the increasing levels of violence that followed Aristide’s removal from office, greater attention has been given to issues of violence reduction and human security. The government has set up a National Commission on Disarmament, Dismantlement and Reintegration (CNDDR), which includes a representative of the Women’s Ministry. The National Disarmament Strategy states its goal to be ‘improving citizen security by contributing to eradicate violence carried out by gangs and the criminal activity that disturbs urban areas and other parts of the country’<sup>43</sup>. It aims to do so by restoring security and developing the communities most affected by violence. According to its President, its mandate includes all that leads to violence, which implicitly includes looking at issues relating to women and violence. Women have been targets for violence in the context of rivalry between different gangs but have also been used as soldiers. More have acted as accomplices by virtue of their dependent relationship on members of armed groups (this assertion is in line with the argument used by Loutis, 2006).

The UN peacekeeping force, MINUSTAH, charged with assisting the government in its efforts to restore peace and stability, has been given a mandate to pursue a community violence reduction approach, including through support of the CNDDR<sup>44</sup>. It aims to assist with the reintegration of former armed actors into the community by assisting them directly as well as the local population as a whole. It does not, therefore, seek to target SGBV, although the head of the unit in question agrees that domestic violence is a serious problem<sup>45</sup>. In parallel, UNDP is developing a community security programme which seeks to strengthen the capacity of communities to manage conflict and to accompany victims of violence. In this context it has assisted with setting up local Forums involving local municipal authorities, representatives of local associations and the community as a whole who are expected to work together to design and implement local plans for the reduction of violence.

These activities are planned in support of CNDDR’s National Strategy and are initially being implemented in 9 priority areas<sup>46</sup>. The extent to which this work will address violence against women is not clear at the time of writing. Nonetheless, the inclusion of a commission on women’s affairs as part of each Forum is intended to contribute towards reducing women’s vulnerability through reducing their dependency on men, while the creation of a space for victims of violence within each community is expected to provide for women who suffer domestic and sexual violence. Moreover, there is a commitment to create a national observatory on violence that will collect data and make policy recommendations. Although the UNIFEM project and the National Plan for Ending Violence Against Women have chosen to focus primarily on rural areas, where support services for women are relatively under-developed, there is nonetheless a clear overlap of agendas in the work being proposed.

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<sup>43</sup> Stratégie Nationale pour le Désarmement, la Réduction de la Violence et la Sécurité Communautaire (CNDDR, 2006)

<sup>44</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1780 (2007). The mandate also includes support to the police in ensuring security, providing training and strengthening institutional capacities.

<sup>45</sup> IDI with Adama Ndao

<sup>46</sup> These are Bel Air, Martissant, Cite Soleil, Carrefour Feuilles and Pelé-Simon in the Metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, Petit Goave in the Western department, Descahos and Raboteau in Gonaives, and La Fossette in Cap Haitien

Unfortunately, very little meaningful communication between the bodies responsible for attempts to reduce armed/urban violence (CNDDR and MINUSTAH/UNDP), on the one hand, and violence against women (the Concertation Nationale), on the other, seems to have taken place, despite the fact that several institutions are represented on the apparatus being put in place in pursuit of the eradication of both forms of violence<sup>47</sup>. As a result, there is a risk that violence against women will be marginalised, and the important steps forward made by the women's movement, the structures it has put in place and the lessons it has learned about how to tackle the subject, will be overlooked.

It is also important to highlight another governmental initiative to tackle all forms of violence, including SGBV. This is a relatively new initiative undertaken by the MSPP, which has resulted in a draft plan to overcome violence that has been drawn up in consultation with other key institutions but which has not yet been endorsed by the relevant parties. As a result, the plan, its objectives and the proposed implementation mechanisms are not yet available, but similar concerns about the need to achieve harmonisation between the various initiatives are also valid in this context.

Civil society groups, including women's organizations, have also taken action to try to pressure the government to do more towards ending insecurity. An example of this is the leading role they have taken in organising marches urging more decisive public action to combat kidnapping and other forms of violent crime, which have recently taken place in Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haitien.

## **7.2 Traditional mechanisms**

Various forms of social control aimed at preventing violence were described by IDI and FGD participants. In Jacmel, for instance, neighbours may make discrete enquiries about the appearance of strangers and to report anyone whose presence cannot be explained to the police. Nonetheless, members of Fanm Deside say that these same people tend to stand by in cases of domestic violence, arguing that everyone should mind their own business. Such action can also provoke hostility towards innocent outsiders, as in one case mentioned where a man's accent led him to be suspected of being a deportee from the United States (therefore associated with acts of violence) and he narrowly missed being beaten up.

The fear of urban violence spilling over into rural areas in a context where the police are unable to provide meaningful protection for the local population is widespread and has provoked further responses from the local population in certain localities. Self-defence brigades have been created in various parts of the country, including one sub-section of Leogane. This group, which grew out of a community organisation concerned with growing security threats, aims to protect the local population from 'enemies' (described as '*bandits, people who behave like ruffians, chimè<sup>48</sup>, delinquents: people who are responsible for creating trouble. They wear ear-*

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<sup>47</sup> The MCFDF, for instance, is represented on the governmental task force for the priority areas and is formally part of the CNDDR. MINUSTAH are both part of the Concertation Nationale and are directly involved in implementing violence reduction measures in support of CNDDR.

<sup>48</sup> Armed supporters of Aristide

*rings and scarves on their heads, they smoke marijuana, their trousers are falling down their ass*<sup>49</sup>.

This brigade claims to have 2-300 supporters, male and female, some of whom are armed. They respond to a summons made by hitting the iron curb on the roadside. However, the security threats that it exists to counter are external and therefore do not include local people responsible for violence against women. Its leaders claim that they always hand over any suspects to the police (in contrast to another group in near-by Fondwa, which is said to have lynched a group of bandits from Carrefour). Both the police and the *Juge de Paix* interviewed in Leogane, on the other hand, were clear that they cannot recognise the Brigade as a legitimate actor in ensuring security, as it can sometimes do more harm than good<sup>50</sup>.

In this context it is important to discuss one particular case that is relevant to the work of UNIFEM, that of *voudou*<sup>51</sup> societies, the target group of one of the project partners, FOVIS. The sense of exclusion felt by *voudou* practitioners, particularly those who live in an already marginalised urban areas (*geto*) such as Carrefour, means that there is a strong reluctance to seek recourse among the formal institutions of the outside world<sup>52</sup>. People who have been initiated at a particular *hounfó* (temple), have strong bonds equivalent to family ties, involving mutual respect and obligations. In the words of FOVIS Coordinator, Mirlène Joanis:

*'Within vaudou, you are the child of the person who's in charge of the place where you're initiate. You have to respect them and they are supposed to protect you. In this way you can be someone's partner and child at the same time. You can't take them to court because of this. If you did, you'd be taking the whole vaudou community to court too. It would be a clash between two cultures. You would be seen as an enemy and would have to cut all links. Instead, they want to settle things in their own way. It's another kind of conflict resolution mechanism that respects the rules of the lwa<sup>53</sup> and of the society. For this reason, you have to work inside the peristil<sup>54</sup> and talk to the whole community so that you get a collective commitment to end violence. At the moment, it's accepted that if a woman does something wrong, the man has the right to hit her. This attitude has to change. You have to develop a culture where violence against women isn't tolerated.'*

Instead, initiates who have a grievance against another look to their spiritual father or mother (*papa* or *maman kanzo*) who will talk to the perpetrator of the offence, pass judgement, make them understand what they have done and tell them that they must stop their offensive behaviour. If necessary, sanctions can be imposed, such as a beating or imprisonment inside the part of the *peristil* belonging to the spirits. In some cases, the partners have been separated for a period before

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with members of Self-Defence Group in Palmiste Avin

<sup>50</sup> Indeed, the Brigade members gave a story of a man they arrested who turned himself into a mule in order to carry out cattle thefts

<sup>51</sup> Vaudou is the traditional religion in Haiti, a syncretic blend of African beliefs and Catholicism. This spelling has been preferred in English in order to avoid the negative connotations associated with the more usual 'voodoo'.

<sup>52</sup> One woman in Carrefour expressed this marginalisation in the following terms: 'Vaudou practitioners suffer more because other Haitians say we are dirty, we're devils, that we may eat them',

<sup>53</sup> Vaudou spirits

<sup>54</sup> Vaudou temple

subsequently being reunited. Participants in Carrefour assert that cases of physical violence against women have been successfully dealt with in this way.

Generally, focus group participants in all of the areas visited – the men and elected officials (all of whom were themselves men) in particular – referred to the importance of intervention by respected local figures<sup>55</sup>, who try to talk sense to people responsible for violence. In cases of domestic violence they can try to calm the man down, and sometimes, this is said to work.

*Some things are secret. You hear about them but you can't enter into it. But if you catch people in the midst of something, you can try to sort it out. If the person is prepared to listen, you can give advice. Sometimes they feel they've acted badly. They may start to understand and change how they behave<sup>56</sup>.*

A number of the older and more conservative women also made similar remarks and said that they urge couples to stay together for the sake of the children.

*'When there is no man in the house it's like a cemetery without the presence of the Bawon [ie. Baron Samedi, the spirit who guards the cemetery, said one woman from La Vallee] ... 'women love their children from the time they breastfed them but when there is a father present, children are better behaved'<sup>57</sup>.*

In a more formal sense, this reconciliatory approach can take the form of a family council, which involves relatives and, where a couple has been legally married, the 'godfather' and 'godmother' who were chosen to bless the marriage. The men in Léogane said that they preferred this option in part because it is cost-free, unlike recourse to courts (which requires a lawyer and may not result in the desired outcome) or even the police, who have to be given a payment in order to respond. Only after this, once this step has been tried and failed, may they consider going to formal institutions for help. Several of the police officers interviewed also expressed their role in terms of calming the dispute.

*'It's quite delicate. We always play the role of mediator. We always try to reconcile the couple and see how they can start their life together again<sup>58</sup>.'*

Nonetheless, he continued, in more serious cases that are criminal in nature, the police are obliged to take action against the perpetrator.

This tends to confirm the finding in the Larrain and Fernandez (2007) study that a friendly agreement is the preferred option of much of the population, as well as among various officials involved in the response to violence against women. Certainly, a significant number of participants believe that this approach can bring results, and while violence is not condoned, the primary objective is generally to keep the family united. It would also seem clear from the number of cases that continue to become public, that interventions are not always systematic or successful. One focus group participant in

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<sup>55</sup> These may be local elected officials, leaders of the social groups to which the individuals involved belong, such as churches and *rara* bands, elderly people who have a certain moral authority, etc

<sup>56</sup> Man from focus group in Leogane

<sup>57</sup> Such a comment is striking in a country such as Haiti where 44% of households are headed by women (EMMUS IV)

<sup>58</sup> Police officer interviewed in Fort Liberté

Fort Liberté described her dismay when a large group of people stood by while a man beat his pregnant wife.

There appears to be less social tolerance towards the issue of rape than with respect to domestic violence. The men in La Vallée did not think that a family council is an appropriate response in the case of sexual violence. In Plaisance, it was claimed that the traditional practice whereby families try to get women who have been raped to marry the man responsible has been dropped. The practice was not mentioned at all in other localities, suggesting that it is no longer widespread. However, whereas there seem to be few instances of payments being used as a means of attempting to paper over the damage in cases of domestic violence, such a practice does seem to occur with regard to rape.

Various other social mechanisms are employed to restrict levels of violence. In Bewo in La Vallée, for instance, there is a tradition of public shaming of people responsible for inappropriate behaviour. A person using a device to project and disguise their voice criticises the errant behaviour from a mountain top. In other areas, the local population point to a willingness to *'live together as brothers'* as a force for keeping the peace. This tendency arguably serves to suppress conflict in an effort to ensure social cohesion, often at women's expense. The representative of the MCFDF in Jacmel explained that Carnival and *rara* bands often carry hostile messages, and the *juge de paix* in Plaisance found herself the subject of a song ridiculing her refusal to cede to pressure in releasing a person accused of rape. However, in another instance, AHDESE encouraged a *rara* band to denounce a perpetrator of domestic violence in one of their songs, an example of how traditional mechanisms can be used to encourage positive change.

## **8. Institutional capacities for responding to cases of gender-based violence**

### **8.1 Legal system**

Although there is no centralised data at present to demonstrate the trend<sup>59</sup>, several key informants pointed to the increasing number of cases coming to court as one of the main achievements in the fight to overcome violence against women. A number of well-publicised emblematic cases have helped encourage women to come forward by demonstrating that it is possible to achieve redress within the Haitian legal system. In this respect, the systematic use of medical certificates has been crucial. This contrasts with earlier attempts to seek justice for victims of sexual abuse during the 1991-94 *coup d'état*, which failed because of the lack of legal proof that any offense had been committed. Moreover, significant work has gone into strengthening the legal framework relating to SGBV. In addition to the 2005 Decree, which increased the seriousness of rape as a crime, the MCFDF has been involved with preparing a law on violence against women.

Certain administrative measures have also been taken to facilitate the prosecution of cases of sexual and domestic violence. The Parquet (public prosecutor's office) of Port-au-Prince has formed a working group with the specific purpose of following up on cases so that they are not thrown out on technicalities. It has also opened a 24-hour hotline, *Femmes et Enfants en Danger* (Women and

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<sup>59</sup> This information should be available at the departmental level in 2009, thanks to the information gathered using the single data collection form

Children in Danger), so that immediate legal action can be initiated. The Justice Ministry has also issued a memo to ask the Parquets everywhere to give a high priority to cases of SGBV.

Nonetheless, confidence in the legal system – particularly outside Port-au-Prince – remains low. Focus group participants and a number of people interviewed accuse judges of corruption or of acquiescing to out-of-court settlements, even in serious cases where such an outcome is not accepted by law. In one case mentioned by the MCFDF Director in the North East, a girl aged 13 was raped several times by a man who had taken her to the Dominican Republic. Whereas the law sets a clear sentence in such circumstances, he was released after one month in prison and payment of 20,000 gourdes compensation to the family because sex was supposed to be the girl's way of thanking the man for the service he had rendered.

SOFA and MCFDF representatives have denounced cases where the sentences passed by judges have been below that stipulated by law. In such cases '*women are victims twice over because they don't get proper justice*'<sup>60</sup>. On the other hand, several of the legal officials met stressed that they come under pressure from local elected officials who want to interfere with the judicial process, often in favour of a male aggressor.

Training of legal officials has been carried out by URAMEL and has clearly made a difference in some instances. The *Juge de Paix* in Plaisance explained how she is more inclined to hear cases of violence against women behind closed doors now that she has a better understanding of the sensitivities involved. However, this training has not been systematic<sup>61</sup> and its application has not been evaluated. Further training in how SGBV should be addressed is planned by the MJSP for all those involved at different stages of the legal system but no timetable has been fixed for its implementation and no budgetary provision currently exists to enable this to happen.

The process involved with seeking legal redress is long (2-3 years in some cases, according to SOFA) and complex, so that victims often start to lose hope<sup>62</sup>. The support of a lawyer is therefore crucial, which is why the provision of legal aid by a number of NGOs has proven extremely valuable in bringing certain cases to court. Unfortunately, such assistance is not available throughout the country despite the fact that the state is mandated by law to provide legal assistance and counsel.

## **8.2 Haitian National Police**

In all the communities visited – with the exception of Carrefour, discussed in Section 6.1.1 above, where there was greater antagonism – men and women tended to show a broadly favourable but nonetheless ambiguous attitude towards the police. On the one hand, there is considerable recognition of the role of the police in providing security at a community level. In the Venn Diagram exercise, all focus groups identified the PNH as an institution capable of assisting in response to a case of SGBV and indicated that the police are relatively accessible to the community in question. '*When the police are there, you feel you have security*' was the feeling expressed by a female participant in Fort Liberté. On the other hand, the same people's assessment of the performance of the PNH tends to be somewhat lukewarm. The police are not always seen to have the will to

<sup>60</sup> IDI with the Director of the MCFDF in the North East

<sup>61</sup> 3 out of 5 *juge de paix* interviewed had received training from URAMEL

<sup>62</sup> Here too, however, it is important to acknowledge some progress. The number of criminal court hearings, where serious cases are heard, has recently been increased.

respond. ‘*The police can’t be bothered*’ one woman in Plaisance complained. They are accused of failing to respond to calls for intervention because they say they have no vehicle or fuel, and they are often said to demand a cash payment in order to come out<sup>63</sup>. The police themselves cite logistical constraints as being among their chief difficulties in being able to respond adequately to cases of SGBV, and they undoubtedly face great challenges in covering large areas with very few resources. Some key informants however qualify this picture, asserting that when there is a will to do so, the police find ways of ensuring transportation, thus what is required are tighter controls to prevent existing resources being used for personal benefit.

This situation tends to endorse the emphasis put by the international community on support to the police as one of the main planks of the on-going security sector reform, along with support for the judiciary and prison system. There is a recognition that there are currently too few police to meet security needs, which affects the capability of the PNH to carry out their duty of protecting the Haitian population. A target has been set to raise the numbers in the force from the existing 9,125 to 14,000 by 2011, while in the meantime 2,091 UNPOL officers are in-country to provide training and accompaniment to the national police<sup>64</sup>. Some training on dealing with SGBV has been carried out by MINUSTAH, and each geographical department is supposed to have an UNPOL officer present to support local police dealing with cases of violence against women. It is not clear, however, how systematic this accompaniment is. The PNH gender focal point in Cap Haitien did receive some valuable support from a mentor but this was not sustained following her departure.

A more systematic response by the police depends on adequate structures and training being put in place. Some timid steps have started to be taken in this direction but progress is slow. A National Coordinator for Women’s Affairs has been appointed within the PNH, and is part of the Chief of Police’s Cabinet. Her presence has enabled the Concertation Nationale to gain access to key individuals within the police hierarchy, but the fact that she holds a relatively junior rank, has virtually no resources at her disposal and has other day-to-day policing functions mean that her position is somewhat marginal. Gender focal points have also been appointed in certain departments, including one highly motivated officer in Cap Haitien. However, she lacks any means of transport, despite nominally covering three departments, and is concerned that she is unable to ensure the necessary confidentiality for victims. As a result, she feels discouraged at not being able to carry out her duties correctly and instead tends to refer cases on to NGOs, including AFASDA, one of the UNIFEM partners.

The key element of the police response is understood to be the ability of the PNH to receive women who have been victims of violence in an open and non-judgmental manner. Training on SGBV for the PNH has only been dispensed in an *ad hoc* way to date at the Police Academy, for some recruits, or in short sessions organised by MINUSTAH<sup>65</sup>, so that not all police have benefited. Consequently,

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<sup>63</sup> In one case described in La Vallée, this was as much as 1500 gourdes (close to US\$40). When this amount was not paid, the police failed to respond.

<sup>64</sup> ICG, 2008. The report also points out that to bring Haiti in line with international standards, it would be necessary to have a force of 18,000 police given the size of the population. According to the ICG, the lack of transport or fuel budget means that the PNH often has to rely on UNPOL to execute its mandate and go on patrol.

<sup>65</sup> According to one of MINUSTAH’s Gender Affairs Officers a joint training involving UNFPA, UNAIDS and her own unit was recently given to new recruits on gender, human rights, sexual violence, HIV etc. Training is also

the attitude towards women who come to the police for help generally depends on the individual sensitivity of the duty officer. The women participating in focus groups, who had generally not had direct experience of seeking police help, did not mention this as a consideration that would effect whether or not they would turn to the PNH. Nonetheless, representatives of women's organisations and the MCFDF consider support in the face of potential derision from the police to be an important benefit of offering accompaniment to victims. Otherwise, while some police officers can be sympathetic, others are liable to ridicule women who are victims of violence. Comments that imply the woman herself must in some way be responsible for provoking the perpetrator of the violence are said to be common<sup>66</sup>.

It is noteworthy that, as with the *juge de paix*, in the absence of clear guidelines as to how cases of SGBV must be handled, the police sometimes take on a mediating role. One officer in the North East explained that '*we try to reconcile the couple so that they can start their life together again*', although he insisted that where there has been serious violence they are obliged to take formal action.

In order to ensure a systematically supportive environment for victims of SGBV, plans have been developed to open women's police desks at a number of pilot stations (Delmas 33 and Fort National in the capital, as well as one in the North East and the South East) but these have yet to be implemented. A recent cooperation agreement with Brazil may lead to more rapid progress in the near future. Beyond this, a training module for the Police Academy was developed in 2000 and is currently being updated with input from the MCFDF but will need to be endorsed by the relevant authorities before it can be adopted.

### **8.3 Health system**

Procedures for dealing with victims of sexual violence have been much more clearly defined since the introduction of the protocol for care of such women and the associated training that has been given to the relevant personnel within the public system. The effectiveness of this service is currently being evaluated by the Concertation Nationale but although there is a level of satisfaction with the progress made, a number of shortcomings emerged during the course of this study. For instance, the proposed treatment is not always available to women in every commune. In Plaisance, the only health centre is Catholic-run and will not provide emergency contraception, nor does it have the facilities to offer prophylaxis against HIV infection. Women are therefore obliged to make a journey to either Limbe or Pilate in order to obtain this treatment which, particularly for those who live in more isolated areas, makes genuine access even more problematic by increasing the time and cost involved. Given the trauma and pain that they may be suffering, low incomes and the time constraints involved (72 hour limit), this is not a fully satisfactory level of provision.

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given to serving police officers but is arguably too limited in scope. A female Inspector handling cases of SGBV in Jacmel claims not to have been invited to a training session on sexual crimes earlier this year. Nonetheless, she does claim to have received a copy of the material produced and to have read this.

<sup>66</sup> IDI with MCFDF representative in North East. There was evidence of prejudicial attitudes among some police officers interviewed in the course of this study. One (female) officer interviewed referred to the fact that men are provoked by women's 'indecent clothing'. Such attitudes are not, however, universal. Some of the police met during the study were considerably more aware of the social tolerance towards domestic violence and were keen to condemn prevailing attitudes

Moreover, in many cases, the required drugs must be paid for. Except where the rape kits provided by UNFPA are available, the Health Ministry considers that such treatment must be paid for in line with its cost recovery policy. Even then, in some cases, women report that stocks at the hospital pharmacy are used up or that it is closed, forcing victims to buy the medicines from private suppliers at high cost. There is also a serious lack of facilities in both the public and private sector for counselling victims, although some organisations such as Kay Famn do offer this service, while KOFAVIV organises women into self-help groups.

The delivery of the free medical certificate – the result of a protocol signed by the MCFDF and MSPP - is considered by most organisations to be one of the most significant advances made over recent years in terms of enabling women to press charges in cases of SGBV. Nonetheless, a number of problems in terms of its delivery still remain, including:

- A lack of awareness among certain legal and police officials of the fact that any Haitian doctor, and not just those in the public system, are entitled to issue the certificate. In some cases, this misconception has led to cases being rejected<sup>67</sup>
- Women are still being asked to pay for the certificate in some instances, particularly outside Port-au-Prince<sup>68</sup> and in cases where the women present themselves without the support of a women's organisation or being referred by the police or legal system
- The police sometimes insist on the delivery of a medical certificate as evidence of proof of the accusation before arresting a suspect. This can have the effect of putting off action beyond the period when they are mandated to act, The perpetrator then remains free until a lengthy legal process is undertaken, sometimes giving them the opportunity to flee<sup>69</sup>
- The content of the certificates is not always adequate, particularly where doctors have not received training or have not been provided with the format developed by URAMEL

On a more positive note, progress seems to have been made in terms of encouraging women who have been raped to come forward within 72 hours in order to receive the proper treatment as a result of awareness-raising efforts undertaken by a range of organisations. The percentage of all cases recorded by URAMEL presenting themselves within this time limit rose from 27% to 60% between 2004 and 2007.

#### **8.4 MCFDF**

The main role of the Ministry is one of leadership and setting the normative framework necessary to overcome discrimination against women, as well as to engage in promotion of women's rights. Considerable progress has been made in this direction over the last 4 years, as outlined in Section 5 above.

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<sup>67</sup> See for instance SOFA's 'Rapport Bilan V' covering the period Jan-June 2007

<sup>68</sup> In some cases, the fee is said to be for the envelope, for photocopies or for constituting a medical dossier rather than the certificate itself

<sup>69</sup> In another case cited by the Departmental Director for the MCFDF in the North East, however, the police were criticised for waiting to send a woman to hospital because they wanted to make the arrest first and needed the victim to identify the perpetrator.

Participants in a number of the focus groups identified the Women's Ministry as an institution that could potentially help in cases of violence against women, although it was generally considered unable to reach down to a community level. In fact, while the Ministry is unable to offer services to women who suffer violence, it does have a presence in each department where its staff play a role of orienting and accompanying victims through the complex process of finding care and redress. Here too, however, while there was evidence of considerable motivation and all the regional directors could provide examples of success stories, resource constraints seriously restrict their ability to respond effectively.

The Ministry has been involved with promoting two other initiatives that will provide important complementary services to those that exist at present. The first of these is a 24-hour advice-line for women who experience violence, SOS Famn, which is due to become operational later in 2008. The second is the opening of three shelters to accommodate victims over a 3-6 month period, initially in the West, followed by the North and South East. These are to be managed by women's organisations rather than the state.

### **8.5 Civil society**

The level of commitment and professionalism among the larger feminist NGOs is impressive. They are handling increasing numbers of cases and are able to provide the systematic support that women need to take their cases to court. There is a very good understanding of the multiple dimensions of SGBV and an active involvement in advocacy for changes at a policy level. Moreover, participants in focus group discussions were clear that the presence of an organisation defending women's rights can act as a deterrent to violence. In Plaisance, where a local office of AFASDA has recently been opened, one of the participants explained that

*'Before, even if there was violence, it wasn't talked about. Men used to think that they had a right to beat their partners. Now that there's an office and we know what this kind of violence is called, it's more under control.'*

The presence of these groups have also helped empower women.

*'Before Famn Vanyan [the local grassroots women's organisation] existed, women were afraid to speak up, but now they can'<sup>70</sup>.*

*'Our eyes have been opened ... now we have somewhere to take our case'<sup>71</sup>.*

In Carrefour, on the other hand, the women deplored the lack of any institution locally to which they can turn, a consideration that, they say, tends to make men feel that they can do what they like, when they want.

Unsurprisingly, however, the ability of women's organisations to offer services does not match the demand that exists throughout the country and focus group discussions revealed that their existence is either unknown in several of the areas visited (women in Carrefour, part of greater Port-au-Prince, could not name any civil society organisations active in the field of tackling SGBV) or are felt to be

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<sup>70</sup> Female FGD participant in La Vallee

<sup>71</sup> Another woman from La Vallee

too distant. In this respect, the strategy adopted under this project of extending accompaniment to women at a community level is highly appropriate.

## **9. Data Collection**

Figures currently collected by state authorities do not currently enable any national data to be collected on SGBV. Either data is not assembled at all or is not organised in such a way that the gender-specific nature of individual cases can be identified. The registers that exist in the *Tribunaux de Paix* or police stations, for instance, do not record the sex of the aggressor or the victim. Instead cases are listed according to the nature of the offence as categorised by Haitian law. Although rape cases are specified as such, domestic violence falls within '*voie des faits*', (ie. assault), a term which covers multiple forms of physical violence. Nor is data systematically collected within the public health system, although URAMEL has carried out a pilot involving the compilation of data from a group of public and private health centres in the capital.

In order to help establish a more accurate picture of the scope and nature of the problem of SGBV, the Concertation Nationale has established a working group to harmonise data collection. A single data collection form to be used by all institutions has been drawn up and tested and is being used by some institutions (eg. MCFDF, URAMEL etc). In some cases, key informants were not aware of the existence of the form, whilst others claim that the format is not sufficiently adapted to their needs so that they are reluctant to commit themselves to its use. They may, for instance, need to follow up individual cases and therefore require more detailed information, such as secondary contacts that will enable them to trace the person concerned more easily. While the primary purpose of the single form is to generate compatible data that can be used to establish an overview of the situation of violence against women (ie. establish a more accurate picture of patterns and trends) in order to inform policy decisions – something which can be assumed to be of importance to everyone working to combat SGBV - the form must nonetheless be felt to be relevant to the institutions using it. It will be important to find a way of reconciling these conflicting expectations if the data collection tool is to be used as effectively as possible.

A decision has yet to be taken as to who will be responsible for compiling and analysing the data that is generated. The MCFDF, with UNFPA support, is currently working on a database about various issues of relevance to women, including violence, so it could potentially serve this function. Training will also need to be carried out and the necessary materials made available to participating institutions before the form can be used properly. Unfortunately, no timetable for implementing the procedure has yet been fixed nor is any budget available to support its introduction.

Meanwhile, UNDP is also talking about taking steps towards establishing an observatory on violence in Haiti (see Section 7.1), to be managed by the state university and the International Center for Crime Prevention<sup>72</sup>. It remains to be seen to what extent this initiative will take the work of the Concertation Nationale into consideration.

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<sup>72</sup> ICG (2008), op. Cit.

## **10. Links between broader social violence and gender-based violence**

Opinions are divided as to whether or not there is a strong link between SGBV and other forms of violence. On the one hand it is argued that violence against women takes place as a result of men's power over women and would exist regardless of other forms of insecurity. Defenders of this argument fear that by including gender-based violence with other forms of violence it risks getting down played. On the other hand, others claim that, as the most vulnerable within society, women are often targeted when other forms of social and political violence are on the rise. Women are said to be made instruments of war. According to this viewpoint, there is a correlation between overall violence and SGBV. As Myriam Merlet, Head of Cabinet at the MCFDF, explains

*'When someone wants to do harm, they target women. Currently in Haiti there is an on-going social malaise. People want to hurt each other, so they hurt women.'*

Some credence is given to this viewpoint by the fact that there are specific instances of women being used as tools of revenge, as has apparently been the case in Martissant, where women from opposing areas have been the target for rape and assault<sup>73</sup>. KOFAVIV also asserts that the availability of weapons (including knives) has facilitated cases of sexual violence. The Viva Rio/Quisqueya university survey, on the other hand, indicates that relatively few acts of aggression are committed using firearms (only 6%), although knives were used in 20% of cases<sup>74</sup>.

Defining the link between the distinct forms of violence experienced in Haiti is complex and would require a conceptual model that is beyond the limited scope of this study. However, it is perhaps useful to distinguish between root causes, which may vary, and the opportunity created for all forms of violence to flourish by the vacuum created when even the last vestiges of state authority disappear in no-go areas, such as those that emerged in 2004-06. When viewed in this light, the two theories can be reconciled and do not stand in contradiction to one another but simply emphasise two different aspects of a complex and dynamic social system.

## **11. Proposed actions for dealing with SGBV**

Among the proposals for improving the response to SGBV made by participants are the following:

- more awareness-raising for women about what to do should they be victims of SGBV, as well as about their rights in general
- awareness-raising for men

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<sup>73</sup> See IDIs with the President of the CNDDR and representatives of KOFAVIV. However, the Head of MINUSTAH's Community Violence Reduction programme, while saying that she does not want to belittle the importance of violence against women, does not necessarily agree. In her estimation, women and children, although more vulnerable, have not been specifically targeted during the urban violence in Haiti, which is why her programme does not address SGBV directly.

<sup>74</sup> 13% used iron bars, glass or wooden instruments, while 61% involved the use of 'other' instruments which are not specified. Loutis (2006) identifies conch shells, rocks and broken bottles as instruments used particularly by women, while also citing the burning down of houses as another way women attack their opponents.

- strengthening of the regional offices of MCFDF, so that they have adequate resources for the task in hand
- strengthening of women's organisations to be able to take on cases of SGBV more effectively
- provision of more shelters for women
- making more counselling and psychological services available to victims of SGBV
- provision of more training for police, legal and medical staff
- increasing the number of female police officers
- introduction of measures to help women achieve greater economic independence (micro-credit, etc)
- introduction of a sex education programme for young people
- increasing the presence of women in public life

## **12. Assessment of key findings**

1. All forms of SGBV are widespread in all the areas included in the study. Increasing numbers of women are coming forward for support from formal institutions as the gains of the women's movement are translated into concrete measures offering support for women in their search for care and treatment. Cases of rape, particularly those involving minors or which occur outside the home, are also being declared more frequently. Nonetheless, women are often reluctant to come forward, particularly in cases of domestic violence, because of social taboos and their economic dependency on men. More awareness-raising and accompaniment from community-based organisations can help the trend towards more public action against SGBV.
2. A good deal of progress has been made in terms of planning a more systematic response to SGBV. The current UNIFEM project seeks to extend support services to more isolated rural areas and to support organisations aiming to change certain prejudicial attitudes that sustain violence. Inter-ministerial coordination has led to a noticeably stronger commitment to tackling violence against women in the security/justice sector in particular and, to a lesser extent in terms of public health and education. The presence of some form of recourse can be seen to be extremely important in terms of helping uncover the violence that exists, in taking action and in acting as a deterrent by reducing the level of impunity that has previously existed with regard to SGBV. Nonetheless, significant obstacles remain in terms of making this response operational given the political and institutional context in which these changes are taking place. It is vital that the political will to implement the planned reforms is sustained despite the political instability. Civil society has an important role to play in ensuring that the issue is kept high on the political agenda.
3. Collective rape is a widespread problem, and is not exclusively associated with political violence. Young women coming home from evening entertainment are particularly vulnerable. Increased protection from this form of abuse could be offered if appropriate steps were adopted, eg. police presence in recognised 'hot spots' which are known to local people, street lighting, organised transport at certain, and – most importantly - a clamp down aimed at bringing the perpetrators to justice.

4. In the debate about how to reduce all forms of violence in Haiti, women's voices have generally gone unheard<sup>75</sup>. Women are too often simply relegated to the role of victims. Not enough is known about women's role in perpetrating violence (although the work of Loutis, 2006, provides some insights in this respect), and little thought has gone into exploring how women could potentially be used as peace champions. The infrastructure that is currently being put in place to overcome the armed violence that has plagued some of the main urban areas in Haiti over the last decade has tended to overlook gender-based violence, perhaps because it is more socially engrained and therefore less destabilising. Although the areas identified for the UNIFEM project do not correspond with those initially prioritised for high-profile urban violence reduction interventions, it is nonetheless important to take into account the efforts being made by the institutions aiming to reduce violence against women.
5. Whereas it is clear that there is a distinction to be made between the causes and manifestations of violence against women and other forms of social violence (see discussion in Section 10), it is important that the opportunity to introduce gender considerations into efforts to improve security for the entire population is not lost. It is clear from the outcome of the focus group discussions carried out for this study, as well as from many other sources, that protection from gender-based violence is an extremely important aspect of security for women throughout the country. The resources that are being made available to improve security and end armed violence should also be used to tackle violence against women. If this is to be done effectively, greater effort must go into ensuring that both agendas are better harmonised, which in turn requires effective communication and mutual recognition. Good coordination in this respect is essential when UNDP proceed to set up the planned community facilities for receiving victims of violence and must result in the integration of lessons learned by the women's movement in Haiti into their functioning.  
  
At the same time, there is a space for new initiatives that attempt to promote women's involvement in peace-building activities. This is important a) to ensure that they participate more equitably in public activities and can influence the development of such processes, and b) because they may potentially be able to reach across certain barriers more easily than men since they have less of a stake in the status quo (this latter argument is, however, entirely theoretical and remains to be proven).
6. Several institutions are aiming to collect information about violence, including violence against women (Concertation Nationale, UNDP). Accurate data of this kind is clearly of value in Haiti, but there is a serious risk of duplication of effort. This needs to be avoided by ensuring that the institutions concerned agree on the most effective way of dividing responsibilities and that they maintain regular communication. The Concertation Nationale is close to finalising the single data collection form on SGBV but not all the relevant institutions are yet satisfied with its shape. It important to find a way of harmonising the different expectations in order to ensure that the form is used as widely as possible, thereby providing a more realistic picture of the scope and nature of SGBV in Haiti.
7. Although the constraints on the capacity of the PNH are well known and are gradually being addressed, all sections of the population – men and women – would benefit from a greater

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<sup>75</sup> IDI with Myriam Merlet, Chef de Cabinet, MCFDF

police presence to ensure better security. It is largely in response to the absence of effective police support that vigilante brigades - which are clearly a double-edged sword for the community - have emerged. Existing police need to have adequate resources to be able to fulfil their role adequately. More generous allocations of fuel, if not motorbikes or vehicles, seems to be imperative, although these should be accompanied by strict controls on their use in order to avoid abuse.

8. The steps towards getting proper medical and legal care and support are long and complex, and there are many flaws in the system. In some instances, it is difficult for victims to assert their rights without the backing of a recognised organisation (eg. obtaining a free medical certificate, finding PEP or emergency contraception). Women therefore need help in navigating this labyrinth, given the isolation of women in rural areas, this assistance needs to be offered close to hand. The MCFDF does not have enough resources to follow up all cases itself. Community-based accompaniment is therefore an extremely important strategy in providing women with possible solutions to situations of violence that they face. It will give women the confidence they need to come forward and to seek assistance.
9. Women's economic dependency on men is one of the primary factors binding them to violent relationships. Attention therefore needs to be given to ways of promoting women's income generating capacity, either directly or through the promotion of their human capital over the longer term (looking at ways of preventing girls dropping out of school, exploring more viable forms of professional training than the traditional avenues that are generally proposed, etc)
10. Cultural norms legitimising men's dominance over women sustain prejudicial attitudes and provide the social sanction necessary for violence to take place. It therefore seems important to look more closely at issues of patriarchy, masculinity and gender relations. The work of men's organisations such as AHDESE and GAKODA that act in solidarity with women to overcome discrimination and violence is therefore very significant and should be encouraged. However it is important that the role of such groups is clear and that their purpose is not confused with simply offering assistance to men. It seems plausible to argue that some men's general sense of loss of social status as a result of falling standards of living is translated into resentment towards women, who they see as gaining outside support without acknowledging the pre-existing state of inequality. In this sense, the argument put forward by certain members of AHDESE that women's advancement will actually benefit men should be considered a crucial one.
11. The Concertation Nationale has proved an important and innovatory mechanism that has enabled considerable institutional progress to be made towards tackling SGBV. Continued efforts need to be made to ensure that the promised experiment with women's police desks is introduced in the near future. Equally importantly is systematic training and follow-up for all police and employees of the court system. It would be preferable for the National Coordinator for Women's Affairs within the PNH to be freed from other responsibilities in order to concentrate on moving forward these objectives. She and the departmental focal points should be given the necessary resources to carry out their work effectively (ie. Minimal administrative structure and, where necessary, transport).
12. Additional research on several aspects of SGBV would help provide a clearer picture that can guide future interventions. Incest remains a particularly delicate topic that is worthy of further investigation. Women's role in perpetrating various forms of violence also needs to be better

understood. It is also crucial to gain deeper insights into masculinity and its relationship with both social violence and SGBV.

### **13. Implications for Monitoring**

For an amended version of the project logframe, as proposed in this report, see Appendix E.

#### **Output 1.1**

Women are involved in the implementation of identified community-based crisis prevention/ security initiatives

Objectively verifiable indicators:

- Increase in the number of crisis prevention/security initiatives at the community-level (as % of total initiatives) supported jointly by women's organizations and local authorities in the provinces of South East, North and West
- Extent to which community initiatives on crisis prevention/security incorporate identified women's priorities in the provinces of the South East, North and West

**Commentary:** It is questionable whether women's involvement in crisis prevention/security initiatives is the crucial variable. Women's presence can easily become tokenistic. What is important is that (as expressed under Output 2.1) such initiatives are responsive to gender concerns.

The second indicator is essentially a reformulation of Output 2.1 and therefore does not seem to serve any particular purpose.

Output 1.1 could therefore readily be subsumed under Output 1.2.

#### **Output 1.2**

Security sector policies and services at community level are more responsive to women's needs in crisis situations

Objectively verifiable indicators:

- Number of local forums to address community security initiated that incorporate women's priorities in the provinces of South East, North and West
- Increase in the number of cases reported to police desks
- Extent to which female members of the community are satisfied with police response in the provinces of South East, North and West

**Commentary:** The areas where state-backed forum for reducing violence are being implemented do not – with the exception of Cap Haitien - coincide with those selected for the implementation of this project. The former are essentially urban, while the latter is mainly rural, in accordance with the National Plan for the Reduction of Violence Against Women. Whereas several such forums are planned for the West (including Bel Air, Martissant, Cité Soleil, Cité Militaire and Petit Goave) and one is planned in the North (Cap Haitien), none are planned for the South East. Moreover, there is

little prospect – and arguably little justification – for other areas to be included in the mainstream violence reduction plans.

What is of extreme relevance, on the other hand, is to ensure that violence against women is tackled as an integral part of all efforts to reduce violence. The causal link between the two should not be considered relevant. It is more a question of political will. Failure to include SGBV in efforts to combat other forms of violence gives the message that some forms of violence are more acceptable than others, and the large amount of resources being poured into this field represent an opportunity to act on violence against women in crucial parts of the country. Action on this score could potentially reduce widespread violence against women in the future. What is more, failure to work on the two issues simultaneously is likely to prevent the creation of potentially valuable synergies, and lead to duplication of effort. Rather than focus on the creation of new initiatives, it would appear more important to seek to ensure that there is proper coordination and collaboration, which is currently lacking.

Given the way records are currently held in police stations, it is not possible to distinguish how many involve women or cases of SGBV. Nor do women currently seem to be deterred from taking their cases to the police because of a poor reputation of the PNH. Instead the police may fail to respond to requests for intervention, or women may be discouraged by their lack of faith in the justice system to deliver a fair result. In this context, the pilot experiment with women's police desks is crucial. It is to be assumed that these desks will be given the task of keeping records of the number of cases that they receive, but they have yet to be set up. Advocacy on this issue by the Concertation Nationale and other bodies is likely to prove crucial in order to ensure that the plans are implemented in the near future. This step forward, however, would seem to belong more appropriately under Output 2.1.

### **Output 2.1**

Security sector and justice system improve their mechanisms to reduce SGBV

Objectively verifiable indicators:

- Number of women who break the silence on SGBV
- Increase in SGBV cases filed that are investigated
- Increase in SGBV cases filed that are prosecuted
- Increase in SGBV cases prosecuted that are resolved respecting women's rights

**Commentary:** Output is 2.1 and first OVI are appropriate and feasible as framed. For the second OVI, see above.

The third OVI can only at present be measured by Kay Fanm, as neither the courts or any other organisation currently include figures on the number of cases prosecuted in their reports. The single data form will not necessarily be able to generate this information either. Other partner organisations, particularly those who are involved with providing legal aid could be encouraged to include this information in their reports to UNIFEM. Since there is no figure at the start of the project to enable a comparison to be made, it is preferable to express the indicator in terms of a percentage at the end of the project. Moreover, since the speed with which the court system deals with a case is an important part of maintaining confidence in the system, this should be measured.

The fourth OVI presumably should be interpreted to mean cases where the verdict is in favour of the plaintiff and where the punishment is in accordance with existing legislation.

### **Output 2.2**

Women's organisations and civil society organisations are involved in the implementation of community initiatives addressing SGBV

Objectively verifiable indicators:

- Increase in the number of community initiatives (in target communities) addressing SGBV that are initiated or supported by women's organisations
- Increase in the number of community initiatives (in target communities) addressing SGBV that are initiated or supported by men's organizations

**Commentary:** Entirely appropriate and feasible to monitor.

### **Output 2.3**

Communities increase their awareness on the issue of SGBV and its consequences

Objectively verifiable indicators:

- Increase in the media coverage on SGBV of two main national newspapers and selected radio programmes
- Extent to which male and female community members are aware of messages disseminated through media coverage on SGBV (in target communities)
- Extent to which female and male community members in the provinces of South East, North and West condemn SGBV

**Commentary:** Media coverage of cases of SGBV is believed to be extremely important in raising awareness about the importance of victims coming forward. However, the written press is not widely read or circulated outside Port-au-Prince and therefore has limited value. Radio – and to a lesser extent national television - is considerably more influential as it has a further reach and does not require a high standard of (French) literacy. Some national radio stations have web sites where the most important news items are featured. These can be more easily monitored than unwritten news broadcasts, provided a designated person is appointed to monitor the sites regularly. Unfortunately, no previous monitoring has taken place so it is not possible to make any comparisons with the existing situation.

The final OVI is too vague to be quantified, although attitudes can broadly be assessed through the use of focus groups, as in the current study.

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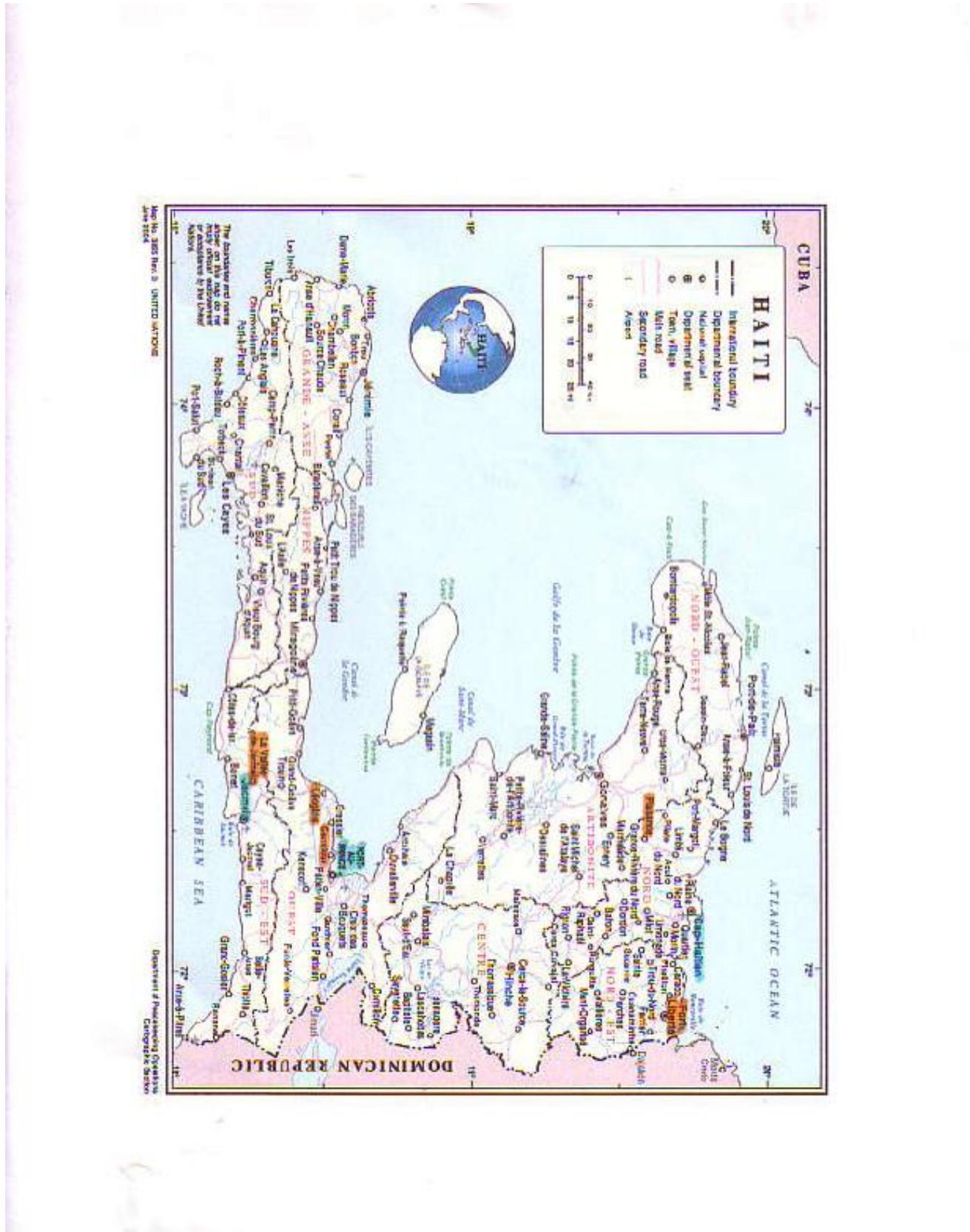
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Appendix A – Map of Haiti showing areas where the study was conducted



## **Appendix B – Interview and focus group guides**

### **Part 1: Guide for focus group discussion with women from Community**

*NB. Questions and discussion will be in Creole.*

As participants arrive, ask for information about their socio-economic status using pre-prepared form.

Ask for :

- first names (*or fictitious name*) and basic details of participants
- Educational attainment (no schooling; primary; secondary; university)
- Whether are members of an organisation or not
- Age (young person (15-25); adult (26-55); older person (55+))
- Economic activity (paid employment; informal sector; unemployed)
- Family status (lives as couple/alone; no. Of children/dependents)

#### **Introduction**

- Introduce research team
- Explanation of what we are doing: UN programme trying to understand violence
- Give assurance of confidentiality. Request permission to record discussion, take notes and take photos
- We want to know what participants think and know – no right/wrong answers; there are likely to be several different points of view so they should say if they disagree with something that is said

#### **Violence in [locality X]**

- What kinds of violence/insecurity take place in (X locality)? *List on flip-chart  
If cannot answer easily, ask participants to think about their own experience*
- Which of these kinds of violence/insecurity happen most often?  
How often do they happen? *Rank in terms of frequency (1-5)*
- Which is the biggest problem? Why? *Rank in terms of seriousness (1-5)*
- Are there any groups of people who tend to be targeted more than others? Why?
- Who is responsible for the worst forms of violence?

Analyse to try to tease out **perceptions/representations of violence/insecurity**, eg.

- Does violence have to cause you physical harm?
- Can someone in your family be violent towards you?
- Are violence and insecurity the same thing?
- What other words do you associate with feeling afraid/being hurt? *Brainstorm*
- Do you yourselves feel safe most of the time?  
*If they do feel safe:*  
Are there things you don't do because you would be afraid?  
*If they do not feel safe:*  
When you don't feel safe, what do you fear?

#### **Preventing/reducing violence**

- Are there any bodies/initiatives to reduce/prevent violence in the area?  
*If so: Who is involved? What does it consist of?*
- Why do you think there isn't more violence?

[Except in Martissant] What stops violence from happening in here like it does in PauP? There aren't many police. What's different? *Probe for social mechanisms preventing violence*

### **Violence against women (if not spontaneously raised by participants)**

- Does violence affect men and women differently? In what ways is it different?
- *If rape and gang rape were not distinguished as separate categories of violence listed above:* in some parts of the country, there is said to be a lot of rape. Does rape happen a lot in [locality X]? Out of a group of 20 women, how many do you think will have been raped in their lives?
- Can rape happen to any women, or just some kinds of women or girls?
- Who is usually responsible? Men who are known to the victims or unknown? Can women be raped by their partners?
- What about gang rape (*kontè/benzawe*)? Does that ever happen here? *If so*, when and how does it happen? Who is responsible?
- In your experience, what other kinds of violence tend to affect women?
- Are there times when violence towards women is worse than others? When? Why?  
*Use time-line to stimulate thinking.*
  1. *Draw a line divided into months.*
  2. *Ask what are the most important events that happen during the year. Mark these on the line.*
  3. *Ask whether there are times of the year when violence towards women is worse and mark on time-line.*
  4. *Draw a vertical line for times of day.*
  5. *Ask what women do at different times of day and mark on line.*
  6. *Are there times when they are more vulnerable?*
- Are there places where women are particularly vulnerable? *Eg. Home/market/fetching water/public transport/at a dance or festivity ... ? Why?*
- [For those aged 25 or over] Has it always been the same, or has the problem become more/less serious over the last 10-20 years? If change, what is this due to?
- Is there a link between violence against women and other forms of violence/insecurity? If so, what?
- What should women who are victims of violence do?
- If you have ever found out that a woman you know has been a victim of violence, what did you do?  
*If no:* what do you think you should do?  
Who should get involved with responding to a case like that?

### **Venn diagram of institutions in the area that exist to deal with SGBV**

Let's think about who could help a woman who is a victim of violence in [locality X]. Where could she go for assistance?

1. Brainstorming of institutions that deal with violence – *prompt for any obvious ones that are missing, eg. PNH/MCFDF/NGOs/church but note were not produced spontaneously*  
*If have difficulty answering: Who can give help?*
  - What is the role of each? How do they operate?
2. For each, decide how effective/important; they are, assigning a pre-prepared small, medium or large circle accordingly
3. Draw a circle to represent the locality. Ask where each circle should be placed in terms of its proximity/ease of access/how trusted it is by local people. Stick it on the chart accordingly.
4. Discuss the results of the diagram.

- a. If there are few institutions/trust is low, why?
- b. Would the chart look the same if it were a husband who was beating his wife?
- c. What if it was a man who was attacked?
- d. How would they like to see the diagram change?
- e. What do they think needs to happen for this to change?

NB. It will be possible to use this diagram in the same locality at the end of the project to assess whether the picture has changed. Have any new institutions appeared? Are any of them, eg. PNH, more/less trusted to act than before?

### **Proposals**

- What do you think needs to happen/change to reduce violence/violence against women?

*Where possible try to ask for specific suggestions/clear priorities*

### **Concluding remarks**

- Thanks to everyone for their contribution
- Any final questions/comments?

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## **Part 2: Guide for focus group discussion with men from Community**

*NB. Questions and discussion will be in Creole.*

As participants arrive, ask for information about their socio-economic status using pre-prepared form.

Ask for :

- first names (*or fictitious name*) and basic details of participants
- Educational attainment (no schooling; primary; secondary; university)
- Whether are members of an organisation or not
- Age (young person (15-25); adult (26-55); older person (55+))
- Economic activity (paid employment; informal sector; unemployed)
- Family status (lives as couple/alone/with parents; no. Of children/dependents)

### **Introduction**

- Introduce research team
- Explanation of what we are doing: UN programme trying to understand violence
- Give assurance of confidentiality. Request permission to record discussion, take notes and take photos
- We want to know what participants think and know – no right/wrong answers; there are likely to be several different points of view so they should say if they disagree with something that is said

### **Violence in [locality X]**

- When people have disputes/disagreements, how are these resolved?
- What kinds of violence have you ever suffered? *List on flip-chart*
- Are there any kinds of violence that you yourselves have ever been responsible for?
- Are there any other forms of violence/insecurity in (X locality)?
- Which of these kinds of violence/insecurity happen most often?

- How often do they happen? *Rank in terms of frequency (1-5)*
- Which is the biggest problem? Why? *Rank in terms of seriousness (1-5)*
  - Are there any groups of people who tend to be targeted more than others? Why?
  - Who is responsible for the worst forms of violence?

Analyse to try to tease out **perceptions/representations of violence/insecurity**, eg.

- Does violence have to cause you physical harm?
- What's the difference between violence and annoyance?  
*Look for awareness of power imbalance/intimidation*
- Can someone in your family be violent towards you?
- Are violence and insecurity the same thing?
- What other words do you associate with feeling afraid/being hurt? *Brainstorm*
- Do you yourselves feel safe most of the time?  
*If they do feel safe:*  
Are there things you don't do because you would be afraid?  
*If they do not feel safe:*  
When you don't feel safe, what do you fear?
- Do you ever feel powerless (ie. Unable to do what you would like to do for reasons other than not having money to do so?)

#### **Preventing/reducing violence**

- Are there any bodies/initiatives to reduce/prevent violence in the area?  
*If so: Who is involved? What does it consist of?*
- Why do you think there isn't more violence?  
[Except in Martissant] What stops violence from happening in here like it does in PauP?  
There aren't many police. What's different? *Probe for social mechanisms preventing violence*

#### **Violence against women (if not spontaneously raised by participants)**

- Does violence affect men and women differently? In what ways is it different?
- What sorts of violence take place between men?
- What sorts of violence against women are there?
- Why do you think this happens?
- Can rape happen to any women, or just some kinds of women or girls? Can husbands rape their wives?
- What do you think women who are victims of violence should do?
- If you have ever found out that a woman you know has been a victim of violence, what did you do?  
*If no: what do you think you should do?*  
Who should get involved with responding to a case like that?

#### **Venn diagram of institutions in the area that exist to deal with SGBV**

Let's think about who could help a woman who is a victim of violence in [locality X]. Where could she go for assistance?

5. Brainstorming of institutions that deal with violence – *prompt for any obvious ones that are missing, eg. PNH/MCFDF/NGOs/church but note were not produced spontaneously*  
*If have difficulty answering: Who can give help?*
  - What is the role of each? How do they operate?

6. For each, decide how effective/important; they are, assigning a pre-prepared small, medium or large circle accordingly
7. Draw a circle to represent the locality. Ask where each circle should be placed in terms of its proximity/ease of access/how trusted it is by local people. Stick it on the chart accordingly.
8. Discuss the results of the diagram.
  - a. If there are few institutions/trust is low, why?
  - b. Would the chart look the same if it were a husband who was beating his wife?
  - c. What if it was a man who was attacked?
  - d. How would they like to see the diagram change?
  - e. What do they think needs to happen for this to change?

NB. It will be possible to use this diagram in the same locality at the end of the project to assess whether the picture has changed. Have any new institutions appeared? Are any of them, eg. PNH, more/less trusted to act than before?

#### **Proposals**

- What do you think needs to happen/change to reduce violence/violence against women?

*Where possible try to ask for specific suggestions/clear priorities*

#### **Concluding remarks**

- Thanks to everyone for their contribution
- Any final questions/comments?

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### **Part 3: Questionnaire for in-depth interviews with CASEC/ASEC; *juges de paix*; local police; other *notab***

#### **Introduction**

- Ask for first name and exact title of interviewee
  - How long in this post?
  - Explain objectives of study and how results will be used
  - Give assurance of confidentiality
  - Request permission to take notes
1. What role, if any, do you have in terms of providing security for the community?  
NB. Role can be preventive/obtaining justice
  2. Are you obliged to report to anyone about this work?
  3. What kinds of violence do you see most often? What action do you take?
  4. Do you keep any records?  
*If so, interviewer to ask to see them; look at whether records can be analysed according to gender, type of violence, outcome of case, etc.*
  5. Have any cases of **domestic violence** (ie. Between couples) been brought to your attention?
  6. *If yes*, how often do you hear about such cases?

*If none reported, move on to Q12*

7. Do you have any procedures/guidelines for what to do if such a case is referred to you?  
*If yes: Are you always able to follow them? If not, why not?*
8. Thinking about one or two of the most serious cases, what did you do when you were informed about these cases?
9. What happened? How was the case dealt with, and what was the outcome [*out-of-court settlement; court prosecution; no action taken ...?*].
10. Why did you choose this course of action?  
*If they did not refer to official channels, why not?*
11. Did you face any obstacles? If so, what were they?
12. Have any cases of **sexual assault/rape** outside the family been brought to your attention?
13. *If yes, how often do you hear about such cases?*  
*If none reported, move on to Q13*
14. Do you have any procedures/guidelines for what to do if such a case is referred to you?  
*If yes: Are you always able to follow them?*
15. Thinking about one or two of the most serious cases, what did you do when you were informed about these cases?
16. What happened? How was the case dealt with, and what was the outcome [*out-of-court settlement; court prosecution; no action taken ...?*].
17. Why did you choose this course of action?  
*If they did not refer to official channels, why not?*
18. Did you face any obstacles? If so, what were they?
19. Have you ever had any training relating to violence against women?  
*If so, who from? When? What have you learned?*
20. Do you know what the 2005 Decree modifying the Code pénale on sexual assaults says?  
*Researcher to give interviewee a copy if does not have one*
21. Do you know about the Protocol for delivery of a free medical certificate for cases of SGBV?  
*Researcher to give interviewee a copy if does not have one*
22. Are there any changes that you consider necessary in order to tackle SGBV more effectively in [locality X]?

### **Concluding remarks**

- Thanks

**Part 4: Questionnaire to be used during in-depth interviews with representatives of institutions working to tackle violence (CNDDR; PNH; PNUD; MINUSTAH Community Violence Prevention Programme)**

**Introduction**

- Introduce interviewer and UNIFEM project
- Explanation of what we are doing and why, also what will happen with results
- Confirm name and title of person being interviewed

**Institution Y**

1. Please explain your organisation's role/mission in terms of preventing and/or reducing violence?
2. What kind of activities are you involved with in order to achieve this?
3. Which geographical areas are concerned?
4. What are your target groups? What percentage of women are involved?
5. What are the most frequent types of violence that you deal with?
6. Do you have any systems for recording violent incidents/measuring the incidence of violence?

*Follow-up questions if positive answer is given:*

- Who is responsible for collecting and compiling this information?
  - How is it categorised?
  - Would it be possible to obtain some recent data that they have available?
  - Are there any trends in terms of frequency/types of violence that you have been able to identify?
7. Which institutions do you collaborate with regularly and successfully?
  8. With which institutions is the relationship more difficult?

**Women in peace-building**

9. Do you think there is a special role for women in peace-building/violence-prevention or reduction programmes? If so, what kind of role?
10. Are women systematically involved in the work of your organisation? How?

**SGBV**

11. To what extent do you consider SGBV to be a concern of [institution Y]?

*Follow-up questions if less than categorically positive answer is given:*

If not, why not?

*Consider challenging further:*

- Do you think that men and women face the same security issues?
  - Some people suggest that there is a link between other forms of violence in society and violence against women. What do you think about that argument?
  - Might your work not also be an opportunity to tackle another form of violence that is pervasive in Haitian society (as elsewhere)?
12. Do you ever have incidents of SGBV reported to you?

*If so:* What kinds of violence are most common? Who tends to be involved? How often do you hear about these kinds of cases?

13. Do you think there is any kind of a link between SGBV and other forms of violence?

*If so:* Can you describe what the relationship between them is?

14. Have you had any collaboration with institutions working on SGBV, eg. MCFDF, MINUSTAH's Gender Unit, the *Concertation Nationale* or NGOs? If so, when? What was your experience of that collaboration?

### **Preventing violence and SGBV**

15. What needs to happen [in terms of policy, legislation, institutional capacity, etc] to reduce or prevent violence generally?

16. What needs to happen to reduce/prevent SGBV?

### **Concluding remarks**

- Thank you for willingness to respond to questions
- Will receive invitation to participate in feedback session

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## **Part 5: Questionnaire to be used during in-depth interviews with representatives of institutions working to tackle SGBV (MCFDF; *Concertation Nationale*; MINUSTAH Gender Unit; NGOs)**

### **Introduction**

- Introduce interviewer and UNIFEM project
- Explanation of what we are doing and why, also what will happen with results
- Confirm name and title of person being interviewed

### **Institution Z**

1. Please explain your organisation's role/mission in terms of preventing and/or tackling SGBV?
2. What kind of activities are you involved with in order to achieve this?
3. Which geographical areas are concerned?
4. Who are your principal partners?
5. Who are your principal target groups?

### **Data collection** (where appropriate, questions to be asked to person responsible for collecting data)

6. Are you familiar with the single data collection form for SGBV?  
Are you using it?  
*If not*, what is preventing you from doing so?  
*If is being used*, do you find it easy to use? *If not*, why not? What are the problems?

*Researcher to ask whether may see some of completed forms*

Who is responsible for collecting and compiling this information? How frequently is this done?

Would it be possible to obtain some recent data that they have available?

Are there any trends in terms of frequency/types of violence that you have been able to identify?

### **Experience of collaboration**

7. Which institutions do you collaborate with regularly and successfully?
8. Which institutions is it difficult to collaborate with? Why? Could you please give some examples of difficulties you have faced?

### **Women in peace-building**

9. Do you see a particular role for women in community-based violence prevention/reduction initiatives (eg. CPVD) and if so, what?
10. Has your organisation been involved with promoting any such initiatives?
11. To your knowledge, are women actively involved in these initiatives and are women's concerns being taken adequately on board? *As far as possible, ask for specific details of which the interviewee has direct knowledge.*

### **Preventing violence and SGBV**

12. What needs to happen [in terms of policy, legislation, institutional capacity, etc] to reduce or prevent violence generally?
13. What changes is your organisation advocating for in order to reduce/prevent SGBV?

### **Concluding remarks**

- Thank you for willingness to respond to questions
- Will receive invitation to participate in feedback session

**Appendix C – List of key informants consulted during the course of the study**

**Port-au-Prince**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Function</b>
<b>UNDP</b>	Daniel Ladouceur Mireille Widmer	Peace and Security Unit
<b>Police National d’Haiti (PNH)</b>	Commissaire Marie Louise Gauthier	Coordinator for Women’s Affairs
<b>MINUSTAH Community Violence Reduction Unit</b>	Adama Ndao	Head of Unit
<b>MINUSTAH Gender Unit</b>	Nathalie Ben Zakour Man	Gender Affairs Officer
<b>Ministère de la Condition Féminine et des Droits des Femmes (MCFDF)</b>	Myriam Merlet Carline Laurenceau	Chef de Cabinet Directrice Départementale pour l’Ouest
<b>KOFAVIV</b>	Malya Villard Eramithe Delvas	Responsable Programme
<b>Commission Nationale de Désarmement, Démantèlement et Réinsertion (CNDDR)</b>	Alix Fils-Aimé	Président
<b>Solidarite Fanm Ayisyen (SOFA)</b>	Olga Benoit	
<b>Unité de Recherche et d’Action Médio Légale (URAMEL)</b>	Dr Marjorie Joseph Marina Desmousseaux	Coordonnatrice
<b>Concertation Nationale de Lutte contre les Violences Faites aux Femmes</b>	Dr Nicole Magloire	Coordonnatrice
<b>Ministère de la Justice et de la Sécurité Publique</b>	Josué Pierre Louis	Directeur Général
<b>Kay Fanm</b>	Yollette Jeanty	Coordonnatrice
<b>Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population</b>	Dr Lourdes Marie Belotte	Directrice, Direction de la Santé de la Famille

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<b>Léogane</b>	Roland Delvas	Juge de Paix
	Makinson Durandisse	Service d'Investigation, PNH
	Gasner, Max and Fritz	Members, Vigilante Brigade, Palmiste Avin
<b>La Vallée de Jacmel</b>	Sabalat Cadet	CASEC, Ternier
	Gesner Cadet	Member Asosyasyon Jen Pwogresis Bewo
	Pauline Pierre Louis	President, Asosyasyon Fanm Vayan Lavale Jakmel (AFVLJ)
	Andréenne Pierre Louis	Vice-President, AFVLJ
	Me Wilfrid Deristil	Juge de Paix
	Ephrem Cherenfant	Chef de Service, PNH
<b>Jacmel</b>	Mimose Andrée	Directrice Départementale, Sud Est, MCFDF
	Priscilia Tranquille	Service d'Investigation, PNH
	Marie Ange Noel	Coordonnatrice, Famn Deside Jakmel
	Carline Lafleur	Travailleuse Sociale, Famn Deside
	Kettelie Belizaire	Assistante Sociale, Famn Deside
	Manita N. Saintclair	Assistante, Famn Deside
	Myrline Antoine	Animatrice, Famn Deside
	Jean Bonard Colin	AHDESE
<b>Carrefour</b>	Mirlène Joanis	Coordonnatrice, FOVIS
	Jean Patrick Bellanton	Délégué de Ville
	Bertineau Dabresil	Juge de Paix
	Insp. Evangellot Bact	Responsable Sous-Commissariat St Charles, PNH
<b>Cap Haitien</b>	Fabiola Alcimé	Accompagnatrice, AFASDA
	Edline Estimable	Coordonnatrice Cap Haïtien, AFASDA
	Jeanne Henri Alexandre	Secrétaire Cap Haïtien, AFASDA
	Johane Véréus	Assistante Cap-Haïtien, AFASDA
	Catu Elvaris	Assistante Milot, AFASDA
	Farah Daniel Lauds	Assistante Quartier Morin, AFASDA
	Yvonne Antoine	Assistante Plaisance, AFASDA
	Me Gislène Monpremier	Directrice Départementale, Nord, MCFDF
	Véronique Dorvil	Point Focal pour le Grand Nord, PNH
<b>Plaisance</b>	Michel Henry	Inspecteur Principal, Commissariat
	Me Marie Laurence Fils-Aimé	Juge de Paix
	Sœur Josette Joseph	Responsable Centre Médico-Social Populorum Progressio
	Dr Pierre Ronald	Doctor
	Daniel Casseus	Directeur de la Mairie
	Vertilien Michelange	Délégué de Ville
<b>Fort Liberté</b>	Imose Jean Gédéon	Directrice Départementale, Nord Est, MCFDF
	Me Israel Justin	Juge de Paix Suppléant
	Me Hérode Bien-Aimé	Substitut Commissaire du Gouvernement, Parquet

**Appendix D** – Revised logical framework proposed for project

Narrative Summary [NS]	Objectively Verifiable Indicators [OVI]	Means of Verification [MOV]	Assumptions
<p><i>Output 1</i> Security sector policies and services at community level are more responsive to women's needs in crisis situations</p>	<p>Increase in the number of crisis prevention/security initiatives at the community level (as % of total initiatives) that integrate participation by women's organizations in the Northern and Western departments</p> <p>Number of local forums to address community security initiated in the Northern and Western departments that include actions to tackle violence against women in their plans</p> <p>Extent to which female members of the community are satisfied with police response in the provinces of Sud-Est, Nord, and l'Ouest</p>	<p>Baseline and end of project evaluation</p> <p>Partner reports; MINUSTAH/UNDP reports and press releases; CNDDR reports</p> <p>Focus groups during end of project evaluation</p>	<p>Women have access to security sector actors and crisis prevention planning; local authorities are open to the engagement of women's organizations in planning and execution of policies at the national level, as well as the Northern and Western departments; positive, simultaneous, complementary efforts at national and regional levels to mainstream gender into security and justice programmes; decreasing resistance by police-makers to mainstreaming gender in security plans and programmes; policy makers are open to accountability mechanisms; adequate communication established between the Concertation Naitonale and MINSUTAH/UNDP as well as CNDDR</p>
<p><i>Output 2.1.</i> Security sector and justice system improve their mechanisms to reduce SGBV</p>	<p>Increase in the number of women who break the silence on SGBV</p> <hr/> <p>At least two women's police desks are opened in the West or South East</p> <hr/> <p>Percent of SGBV cases filed that reach court within 18 months</p> <hr/> <p>Percent of SGBV cases where the verdict is in favour of the plaintiff and</p>	<p>Partner records</p> <hr/> <p>Reports from women's police desks and partner organisations</p> <hr/> <p>Partners' records and annual reports</p> <hr/> <p>Partners' annual reports; media coverage; expert legal opinion</p>	<p>Absence of prolonged political crisis; increased commitment and funding on the part of high level leadership and policy makers; Given the existence of the Table de Concentration, a positive climate prevails for addressing state accountability for ending SGBV; Supportive environment for training of justice personnel; Policy makers are open to accountability mechanisms;</p>

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Narrative Summary [NS]	Objectively Verifiable Indicators [OVI]	Means of Verification [MOV]	Assumptions
	punishment is in accordance with national legislation	sought during final evaluation	Women's police desks keep accurate records of cases received
<i>Output 2.2.</i> Women's organizations and civil society organizations are involved in the implementation of community initiatives addressing SGBV	Increase in the number of community initiatives (in target communities) addressing SGBV that are initiated or supported by women's organizations	Partner reports	Simultaneous, complementary efforts by women's organizations at national and regional levels to mainstream gender into security and justice programmes.
	Increase in the number of community initiatives (in target communities) addressing SGBV that are initiated or supported by men's organizations	Partner reports	Men's organizations are clear about their role of acting in solidarity with women to overcome SGBV and discrimination rather than acting to defend men's own interests
<i>Output 2.3.</i> Communities increase their awareness on the issue of SGBV and its consequences	Number of bulletins on SGBV reproduced on web sites of two national radio stations	Web sites of selected radio stations	A positive climate exists for building partnerships to address violence against women; consistent messaging is sustained for effective advocacy; a close evaluation and monitoring framework can be established and implemented
	Extent to which male and female community members are aware of messages disseminated through media coverage on SGBV (in target communities)	Test of retention by groups of men and women in target communities of key messages on SGBV to be gathered during final evaluation	
	Extent to which female and male community members in the departments of South East, North and West condemn SGBV	Focus group discussions with men and women in target communities during final evaluation	