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WhatWorks TO PREVENT VIOLENCE

A practical guide for governments developing pledges to address violence against women and girls

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This guidance helps governments develop a small number of ambitious, credible and measurable pledges to end violence against women and girls. It sets out ten principles for safe and effective action, five tests for credible commitments and a six-step process covering evidence, participation, pledge design, feasibility, financing, implementation and accountability. Governments should use the process proportionately, building on current national plans, evidence, budgets and consultation rather than duplicating them. A credible pledge identifies the problem and population, specifies the action, scale, responsible institution, resources and timeframe, and establishes proportionate arrangements for measuring results, managing risks and reporting progress.

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1. Introduction and how to use this guidance

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a global human rights, public health and development crisis. Ending it requires sustained national leadership, adequately resourced action and stronger international cooperation, grounded in evidence and the priorities and experiences of women and girls.

Governments are increasingly recognising that progress on ending VAWG must be accelerated both within countries as well as collectively, across borders. Ambitious, context-specific commitments can help translate this recognition into practical action, while creating opportunities for mutual learning and coordinated leadership.

A coalition of committed governments is supporting a shared ambition to address VAWG. Its founding members are Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Jamaica, Morocco and Spain, and it is spearheaded by South Africa and the UK. This international effort is organised around three mutually reinforcing mechanisms:

1. **A Global Declaration:** First, a global declaration will set out the case for accelerated action on VAWG and establish shared principles and commitments, including on prevention and disrupting the intergenerational consequences of violence.
2. **A Global Summit to End VAWG:** Second, the declaration will be launched at a UK-hosted summit in 2027, intended to galvanise political support and mobilise action by governments and non-government actors over the following five to ten years.
3. **National Pledges:** Third, signatories to the declaration will be expected to publish pledges setting out the specific national or organisational actions they will take.

Box 1: What is VAWG?

VAWG refers to a range of harmful behaviours directed at women and girls that cause, or are likely to cause, physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm. It is driven by gender inequality, discrimination, and unequal power relations between women and men.

VAWG includes but is not limited to, domestic abuse, sexual violence, harassment, stalking, economic abuse and technology-facilitated violence. Women facing intersecting inequalities, including those related to disability, age, sexuality, gender identity, migration status, poverty and geography, may face heightened risks and additional barriers to support and justice.

This was defined in the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW), which recognised violence against women as a human rights violation and affirmed women's rights to equality, security, liberty and dignity.

SDG 5 provides a unifying global reference point for this agenda, with target 5.2 committing all countries to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres.

Subsequent international and regional instruments are summarised in Annex 1. For a broad overview of the status of VAWG globally, see UN WOMEN's facts and figures page.

This guidance document is a Coalition-backed resource for governments, including existing and prospective Coalition members. It supports governments to develop a small number of ambitious, credible and measurable pledges to accelerate action to end violence against women and girls. The content of this guidance is not intended

to be prescriptive in nature, but rather to support governments in making pledges within their own national contexts. Where time and resources are constrained, the proportionate uptake of this guidance is recommended.

The guidance first sets out the principles of an ambitious, credible and measurable pledge. It then guides governments through an iterative, proportionate process: identifying the problem and implementation gap; engaging stakeholders and prioritising action; selecting relevant RESPECT Women pathways and assessing the evidence; defining the commitment, resources, responsibilities and measures of progress; and testing safety, feasibility and enabling conditions before approval and implementation. Section 4 provides worked examples showing how broad political ambitions can be translated into specific, resourced and measurable pledges. The annexes provide supporting frameworks, data sources and a blank pledge development template.

Box 2: RESPECT Women

RESPECT Women is a global framework developed by WHO and UN Women to support evidence-informed action to prevent violence against women and is referenced throughout this document. It sets out seven interconnected strategies, covering: (1) **R**elationship skills strengthened; (2) **E**mpowerment of women; (3) **S**ervices ensured; (4) **P**overty reduced; (5) **E**nvironments made safe; (6) **C**hild and adolescent abuse prevented; (7) **T**ransformed attitudes, beliefs and norms.

The framework helps policymakers select appropriate interventions, assess the conditions required for effective implementation, and measure progress.

2. Why action is needed and what should guide VAWG pledges

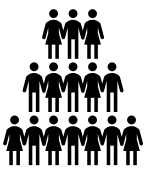
This section makes the case for accelerated action on VAWG and defines the standards against which pledges should be developed and assessed. It examines the scale, consequences and changing nature of VAWG, then sets out the principles and practical tests that distinguish a credible pledge from a broad statement of intent.

These principles provide the foundation for the practical six-step process that follows in section 3. They may be used both to shape the content of pledges and to assess whether proposed commitments are sufficiently ambitious, realistic and likely to contribute to meaningful change for women and girls.

2.1. Why address VAWG, and why now?



VAWG is a global public health and human rights crisis. Over the past decade, 1 in 3 women and girls have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.[1] Worldwide, an estimated 81,100 women and girls were killed intentionally in 2021, with around 45,000 women and girls killed by intimate partners or other family members.[2] On average, every hour over five women or girls are killed by an intimate partner or someone in their family.[3] An estimated 1 in 5 refugee or displaced women in complex humanitarian settings have had sexual violence perpetrated against them,[4] although this is likely to be an underestimation.



VAWG has severe impacts on survivors, their families, their communities and national populations. VAWG can cause enduring physical, psychological, sexual and reproductive, cognitive, relational and economic harms to women and girls over their life-course and across generations. It can limit women's and girls' access to essential health services, education, and

employment opportunities, reducing their economic independence and participation in public life, and creating long-term social and economic inequalities that affect individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole. Ultimately, violence denies women, girls, families, communities, and societies the opportunity to reach their full potential.



The economic cost of VAWG is substantial. The economic cost to the global economy is huge, with some countries losing more than 6% of their GDP.[5] Communities where rates of VAWG perpetration are high suffer a high economic impact including lost wages, worsened productivity, disrupted access to education as well as high costs for response services.[6]



VAWG negatively impacts children. Children are directly harmed by living with violence, fear and coercive control. An estimated 1 in 4 children globally live with mothers who are subjected to intimate partner violence (IPV).[7] Childhood maltreatment and exposure to IPV are associated with an increased risk of being both a perpetrator of VAWG and a survivor of VAWG later in life, as well as an increased risk that some exposed children later perpetrate violence, allowing harm and trauma to reach across generations.[8]



VAWG undermines democracy and national security. Violence restricts who can safely participate in public life, whose voices are heard, and who can influence decision-making. Evidence suggests that violence against women in politics is widespread, with 76% of women MPs surveyed across five countries having experienced violence from the public (online and/or offline).[9] The rise of anti-gender movements and shrinking of civic space are further undermining democracy and increasing the urgency of addressing VAWG. By excluding women from political and public spaces and weakening trust in democratic institutions, VAWG can undermine the social cohesion needed for long-term stability and security.[10]



The risk factors related to VAWG are increasing globally. Conflict, displacement, climate change and economic insecurity are increasing globally, intensifying existing inequalities and creating conditions in which IPV, sexual violence, trafficking, and child marriage, among other forms of VAWG, can escalate.[11] At the same time, technology is reshaping how violence is perpetrated, amplified and sustained, extending abuse across online and offline spaces and enabling perpetrators to act with greater reach, speed, anonymity, persistence and impunity. Effective responses must address both longstanding forms of VAWG and the emerging risks created by wider social, economic, environmental and technological change.[12]

2.2. Principles for credible VAWG pledges[13]

A strong pledge must both uphold the principles needed for safe and effective action *and* meet the practical tests of a credible political commitment.

2.2.1. Principles for effective action

The following ten principles are taken or adapted from RESPECT Women. The accompanying explanation expands their application to pledge-making and incorporates additional considerations relating to survivor-centred and trauma-informed practice, contextual evidence, intersectionality and national and international coordination.

Trauma-informed practice should shape both how pledges are developed and how their commitments are implemented and monitored. It recognises that participants, staff and people affected by pledge actions may have experienced, witnessed or been impacted by VAWG - whether or not they disclose this. It involves understanding how these experiences can affect safety, trust and participation. It further requires adapting policies, procedures and interactions to strengthen people's choice and control and reduce risks of re-traumatisation. This complements survivor-centred practice and the commitment to address gender inequality and unequal power relations; it does not require people to disclose their experiences or assume that all survivors have the same needs or responses.

1. **Put women's safety first and do no harm:** The safety, dignity, autonomy, agency and wellbeing of women and girls should sit at the centre of every pledge. Proposed actions should comply with survivor-centred and do-no-harm principles and with appropriate safeguarding standards. A trauma-informed approach should underpin these commitments, promoting physical and emotional safety, trust, choice and control, and identifying and addressing practice that could cause re-traumatisation. Governments should anticipate and mitigate possible unintended consequences, including backlash, retaliation, stigma, unsafe disclosure, breaches of confidentiality and risks to survivors, participants, women's rights organisations and service providers. Where prevention activities may increase awareness, help-seeking or disclosure, safe, confidential and appropriate services and referral pathways should be available before activities are introduced or scaled.
2. **Promote gender equality and women's human rights:** Pledges should be grounded in the recognition that VAWG is rooted in gender inequality, unequal power relations, discrimination and norms and institutions that privilege men over women. Actions should advance women's and girls' rights, autonomy, voice and access to resources and decision-making. They should not treat violence as a gender-neutral problem or focus only on managing its consequences without addressing the inequalities and power structures that enable it. All actions should be consistent with applicable international and regional human rights obligations and standards.
3. **Leave no one behind:** Pledges should recognise that women and girls do not experience violence, exclusion or access to support in the same ways. Disability, age, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, poverty, sexual orientation, gender identity, migration or displacement status, geography and other intersecting inequalities can heighten exposure to particular forms of VAWG and create additional barriers to prevention, protection, services and justice. Marginalised and underserved women and girls should be meaningfully involved in identifying priorities and shaping implementation. Pledges should specify how actions will be made accessible and how their benefits will reach those currently least well served, rather than assuming that improvements in overall coverage will produce equitable results. Accessibility should be assessed with the women and girls whom the pledge is intended to reach, including women and girls with disabilities and their representative organisations. Actions should identify and resource measures to address physical, communication, information, digital and financial barriers. Depending on the activity, these may include accessible venues and transport, sign language interpretation, accessible formats, communication support and flexible ways to participate or use services.
4. **Set out a clear theory or pathway of change:** Each pledge should explain how the proposed action is expected to address the identified form, driver, risk factor, protective factor or implementation gap and contribute to the intended result. This does not require a comprehensive theory of change for every pledge, but it does require a credible causal pathway linking the problem, the proposed action, the expected

intermediate outcomes and the longer-term contribution to preventing VAWG, preventing recurrence or improving survivors' safety, rights and recovery. Key assumptions, dependencies and complementary actions should also be identified so that apparently ambitious commitments are not based on unsupported leaps between activity and impact.

5. **Use evidence-informed, context-specific approaches and contribute to learning:** Each pledge should draw on the latest available national and local data, research, evaluation and practice-based evidence, alongside established international frameworks (see Annex 1 for further guidance). Evidence generated by women's rights organisations, survivors, affected communities and frontline practitioners should be considered alongside survey, administrative and academic evidence. Rather than applying generic solutions, actions should respond to the specific forms, drivers and patterns of violence, populations affected and institutional conditions within the context. The strength and relevance of the evidence should inform whether an approach is ready to be adapted or scaled, requires further piloting and evaluation, or should not be pursued. Where important evidence gaps remain, the pledge should include proportionate monitoring, evaluation and learning and may itself commit to strengthening the evidence base.

6. **Use participatory approaches:** Women's rights organisations, specialist VAWG organisations, survivor-led groups, affected communities and women and girls facing intersecting inequalities should have meaningful opportunities to shape the selection, design, implementation and monitoring of pledges. Lived experience should inform action through safe, voluntary, accessible and appropriately resourced engagement, including through survivor advisory mechanisms and established national or regional women's rights networks where these exist. Participants should receive clear information in advance about the topics, process, use of their contributions and confidentiality arrangement, including any limits. They should be able to decline questions, pause or leave discussions without having to explain why, and have alternative ways to contribute. Personal disclosure should never be a condition of participation. Facilitators should be equipped to respond sensitively to distress or disclosure, avoid judgement or pressure, and offer access to appropriate support and referral options.

7. **Promote cross-government, multisectoral, multistakeholder and international coordination:** Effective pledges should establish collaboration across the government institutions and sectors needed to address the selected problem. Depending on the pledge, this may include health, education, justice, policing, social protection, finance, labour, housing, humanitarian response and digital regulation, as well as national and subnational government. Actions should be developed and delivered through equitable partnerships with women's rights organisations, civil society, specialist service providers, international organisations, academia, communities and, where relevant, the private sector. Roles, responsibilities and coordination arrangements should be clear, and participating organisations should be adequately resourced. Coalition members may also develop joint or complementary pledges where coordinated international action would add value, particularly in relation to humanitarian crises, conflict-related sexual violence, cross-border displacement, migration and trafficking, technology-facilitated VAWG and the effects of climate change.

8. **Combine interventions where multiple risk factors must be addressed:** VAWG is commonly driven by interacting factors at societal, community, interpersonal and individual levels. Where appropriate, pledges should combine mutually reinforcing interventions that address more than one relevant risk or protective factor. For example, an economic intervention may need to be combined with gender-transformative work, while community prevention may need to be supported by accessible services, institutional reform

and action on perpetrator accountability. Combining interventions should not mean expanding a pledge into an unmanageable list of activities. Each component should be supported by evidence, contribute to the same defined pathway of change and be feasible to deliver with quality.

9. **Connect prevention and response:** Pledges should connect primary prevention with early intervention, risk reduction, survivor support, access to justice and action to prevent further or repeat violence. Prevention programming can increase awareness, discussion, disclosure and demand for services. It should therefore be accompanied by functioning, accessible, survivor-centred and trauma-informed response services and referral pathways. Where minimum response capacity is absent, governments should address this gap before, or alongside, the expansion of prevention activities. Survivor support, justice and perpetrator accountability are also rights-based obligations in their own right and should not be valued only for their contribution to preventing future violence.
10. **Take a life-course approach:** Pledges should recognise that exposure to violence, relevant risk and protective factors and barriers to support change across childhood, adolescence, adulthood and older age. Action should respond to the distinct experiences of adolescent girls, adult women and older women, while addressing the ways in which violence and harmful norms can be transmitted across generations. Early intervention with children and adolescents can strengthen protective factors, promote equality, consent and healthy relationships and prevent violence before harmful attitudes and behaviours become established. Work with boys and young men should challenge harmful gender norms and promote positive, non-violent masculinities without treating them as inevitable future perpetrators or displacing women's and girls' leadership and resources.

It is advised that these principles are applied proportionately throughout pledge development, including when commitments are tested and approved. Regardless of scale and scope, every pledge should uphold safety and rights, apply survivor-centred and trauma-informed practice, ensure inclusion, use relevant evidence and be grounded in a credible pathway to change. Tests of a credible pledge[14]

In addition to meeting the principles above, five practical tests can help governments assess whether a proposed pledge constitutes a credible political and operational commitment. These tests have been developed for this guidance by drawing together relevant international guidance on pledge-making, national action planning and implementation.

1. **Impactful, aligned and demonstrably substantive:** A pledge should make a meaningful contribution beyond business as usual. This may involve introducing a new action, but it can also mean materially accelerating or improving the implementation, financing, quality, coverage or scale of an already existing commitment. The contribution should be assessed in relation to the country's starting point and the problem or implementation gap identified. The pledge should have a credible prospect of producing meaningful change, complement rather than duplicate existing commitments, and align with the Coalition's objectives, international human rights obligations and relevant regional and national frameworks.
2. **Specific, measurable and time-bound:** A pledge should identify the problem or gap being addressed, the action that will be taken, the population and geographical area to be reached, the intended scale and results, the institution responsible and the timeframe for delivery. It should include a clearly defined starting point and proportionate indicators and milestones that allow implementation and outcomes to be assessed. The level of detail required should reflect the scale and complexity of the pledge.

3. **Feasible and institutionally owned:** The proposed action should be realistic in relation to the available timeframe, political context, institutional capacity and delivery systems. A responsible government institution should have clear ownership of the pledge and sufficient authority to coordinate implementation and address barriers. Where several ministries or levels of government are involved, their respective roles, responsibilities and decision-making arrangements should be defined. Potential constraints and dependencies should be identified before the pledge is announced.
4. **Funded and adequately resourced:** A pledge should be supported by credible financing and by the workforce, technical expertise, infrastructure, data and coordination capacity required for delivery. It should identify the anticipated source and duration of funding and explain how expenditure will be tracked. A commitment to provide new, increased or protected financing may itself constitute a substantive pledge where it closes a documented implementation gap and is sufficiently specific, sustained and accountable.
5. **Accountable, transparent and subject to proportionate oversight:** A pledge should establish clear arrangements for monitoring progress, reviewing implementation and responding where action is delayed, ineffective or producing unintended consequences. It should specify how and when progress will be communicated. This may include public reporting. Women's rights organisations and other relevant stakeholders should have an appropriate role in monitoring, oversight and learning. Independent scrutiny through parliament, national human rights institutions, independent commissions, oversight bodies or civil society mechanisms may also be appropriate, particularly for large, system-wide or higher-risk commitments. Accountability arrangements should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of the pledge and should use existing national and international systems wherever these are appropriate. It is important to be held accountable and track implementation. Best practice is to commit to reporting on an annual basis.

Governments may use the ten principles and five practical tests throughout the six-step process set out below to assess whether a proposed pledge is technically sound, politically credible and implementable.

3. Developing a credible pledge: a six-step process[15]

This section sets out a practical six-step process for developing credible pledges to end VAWG. It helps governments move from a broad political commitment to a focused, evidence-informed and deliverable set of actions. The process should be applied flexibly and proportionately because countries will start from different points in relation to data, policy frameworks, institutional capacity, financing and civil society engagement. It is also iterative: governments may need to revisit earlier steps as evidence, consultation, risks or implementation constraints emerge.

Step 1: Identify the problem, risk and protective factors, and the pledge gap

Ground the pledge in an understanding of gender equality, disability and social inclusion[16]

Governments should draw on existing gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) evidence and undertake further proportionate analysis where important gaps remain. This analysis should examine how GEDSI and associated unequal power shape experiences of violence, access to services, participation in decision-making and exposure to exclusion and discrimination.

The analysis should identify:

- Which groups of women and girls are most affected, underserved or excluded;

- The structural inequalities, discriminatory norms and power relations that underpin the perpetration of, and acceptance of violence against women and girls;
- Environmental, institutional, attitudinal and communication barriers;
- Risks associated with women's and girls' participation, reporting or seeking support;
- Gaps in existing laws, policies, services, data and institutional capacity to protect women and girls from violence and hold perpetrators to account; *and*
- Opportunities for both targeted action and the integration of VAWG and gender-equality measures across wider commitments.

Its findings should directly inform the scope, ambition and design of pledges. This activity remains important even when those developing pledges know the context well, as their own assumptions and perspectives may make some inequalities, barriers and experiences less visible. Throughout the pledge-making process, consideration should be given to potential unintended consequences, including backlash, stigma, increased visibility of marginalised groups or the reinforcement of existing inequalities. Where evidence is limited, the pledge should include commitments to strengthen data, consultation and ongoing learning.

i. Assess relevant risk and protective factors

Using the RESPECT Women socio-ecological framework (pages 4-5), governments should identify the societal, community, interpersonal and individual factors most relevant to the proposed pledge. This should include both the factors increasing the risk of violence and the protective factors that the pledge could strengthen. Where relevant, the analysis should include additional risks associated with conflict, displacement, disaster or humanitarian emergency. It does not need to provide a comprehensive assessment of every risk factor in the country.

ii. Ground the pledge in evidence

Pledges should be informed by available evidence on how to prevent and respond effectively to VAWG. Governments should draw on established frameworks such as RESPECT Women, alongside national and local evidence to guide decision making. Approaches should be adapted to the forms, drivers and patterns of violence in each context. A guide to data sources can be found in Annex 1.

The evidence review should consider:

- evidence and analysis from women's rights organisations, survivors, frontline practitioners and affected communities;
- the forms of VAWG being perpetrated, against whom, by whom and in which settings;
- national and subnational prevalence estimates, reporting rates and relevant administrative and survey data;
- existing laws, programmes, services and financing; *and*
- gaps in implementation, coverage and quality.

Where further research is needed to expand knowledge of what works to prevent and respond to different forms of VAWG, this evidence gap may itself be addressed through a pledge. Pledges to strengthen the evidence and knowledge base on VAWG are important to the advancement of the sector, particularly where they respond to identified thematic or geographical gaps. The Sexual Violence Research Initiative's work on global research priorities and evidence gaps may help inform these commitments.

iii. Map existing prevention and response efforts[17]

Governments do not need to undertake a comprehensive mapping of the national prevention and response landscape before developing a pledge. Instead, they should undertake a focused and proportionate stocktake of the policies, programmes, services, financing and institutional arrangements most relevant to the problem or potential pledge area identified. Wherever possible, this should draw on existing reviews, strategies, budget information, administrative data and consultation findings.

The purpose is to establish:

- what relevant action is already being implemented by government, women's rights organisations, civil society and other actors;
- whether existing laws, policies, programmes and services are being implemented with sufficient coverage, quality and financing;
- where there are significant gaps in implementation, institutional responsibility, coordination or access;
- whether effective initiatives led by women's rights organisations, civil society or communities could be supported, strengthened or scaled;
- whether wider government policies and investments, including in health, education, justice, social protection, labour, humanitarian action, transport or digital regulation, could reduce or inadvertently increase VAWG risks; and
- how a pledge would strengthen or accelerate existing action.

The scope of the stocktake should reflect the scale and complexity of the potential pledge. For a focused commitment, discussions with the lead ministry, other directly relevant government bodies, women's rights organisations and specialist practitioners may provide sufficient information. A broader cross-government pledge may require a more structured review across sectors and between national and subnational levels. A rapid review or survey should only be commissioned where important information is unavailable, and its absence would prevent an informed decision. The survey in Annex 4, Template 5 of *Together for Prevention: Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls* may be useful for larger or more complex commitments.

The findings of the stocktake should be used to identify where a pledge could add value, whether by financing, implementing, strengthening or scaling existing efforts, or by addressing a significant gap in provision, coordination or coverage.

Step 2: Engage stakeholders and prioritise action

A pledge should respond to a demonstrable national priority or implementation gap. The purpose of this step is to move from a broad range of possible issues and actions to a small, coherent set of priorities where political commitment could make a meaningful difference.

Prioritisation should be informed by the evidence gathered in Step 1 and by the knowledge, experience and priorities of women and girls, women's rights organisations, specialist VAWG organisations, government institutions, practitioners and other relevant stakeholders. Engagement should therefore begin before the focus of the pledge has been finalised. Step 1 and Step 2 may therefore be implemented at the same time, informed by one another and iteratively applied.

Meaningful participation should continue throughout pledge design, implementation and monitoring. At this stage, however, its primary purpose is to:

- identify which problems and implementation gaps require the greatest attention;
- understand how these problems are experienced by different groups of women and girls;
- assess where government action could add the greatest value;
- identify practical, political and institutional considerations that may affect delivery; and
- ensure that the selection of priorities is not driven solely by institutional preferences or the availability of a pre-existing programme.

Engagement should be proportionate to the scale, complexity and potential risks of the pledge. Governments are not expected to undertake a new nationwide consultation for every commitment. Existing evidence, advisory groups, coordination mechanisms, previous consultations and national or subnational planning processes should be used where they remain current, inclusive and relevant.

Box 3: Important to remember

Before developing a new pledge, it is vital to map commitments already made. Beyond the instruments listed in the annex, governments and organisations may have made commitments on intersecting issues such as: violence against children; children's care reform; gender equality; disability inclusion; refugee protection; GBV in humanitarian contexts; conflict-related sexual violence; Women, Peace and Security; sexual and reproductive health and rights; safety in education; LGBT+ rights; and technology-facilitated violence.

New VAWG pledges should build on, accelerate or close gaps in these commitments rather than duplicate or repackage them. The links provided above are illustrative only.

i. Identify who should participate

The lead ministry or coordinating body should identify the people and organisations whose knowledge, authority, experience or participation will be necessary to select and deliver a credible pledge. The aim is not to involve the largest possible number of stakeholders, but to bring together the perspectives needed to make an informed and legitimate decision.

Depending on the proposed area of action, an inclusive process should draw on the following groups:

- **Women's rights and lived-experience perspectives:** including women's rights organisations, feminist movements, specialist VAWG organisations, survivor-led groups, women and girls with lived experience engaged safely and voluntarily, organisations representing marginalised and underserved women and girls, and affected communities. These stakeholders can provide insight into priorities, barriers, risks and implementation realities.
- **VAWG technical and practice expertise:** including specialist VAWG organisations, frontline service providers and practitioners, researchers and other experts with relevant knowledge of prevention, survivor support, safeguarding, justice, perpetrator accountability and related areas.
- **Government and delivery actors:** including relevant national and subnational ministries, public institutions and authorities, including those responsible for policy, legislation, regulation, budgeting, financing and implementation. Depending on the pledge, this may include the health, education, justice, policing, social protection, labour, transport, digital regulation, humanitarian response and local-government sectors.

- **Relevant sectoral and contextual expertise:** organisations and specialists with knowledge relevant to the proposed priority, including disability inclusion, child rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, migration, trafficking, humanitarian and conflict settings, climate-related risks and technology-facilitated VAWG. Local authorities, community-based organisations and religious, traditional or community leaders may also need to participate where they have a relevant role.
- **Implementation and feasibility expertise:** actors able to assess the financial, workforce, institutional and operational requirements for delivery, including specialists in public finance, budgeting, procurement, institutional capacity, monitoring and evaluation.

Where the issue involves humanitarian crises, cross-border displacement, migration, trafficking, climate-related risks or technology platforms operating across jurisdictions, engagement may also involve international organisations, neighbouring governments, regional bodies or other Coalition members.

ii. Engage safely, meaningfully and proportionately

Women's rights organisations, survivors, specialist service providers and affected communities should help identify and prioritise potential pledges rather than being asked to endorse commitments that have already been selected.

Engagement should be:

- early enough to influence decisions, including the choice and framing of the priority;
- inclusive, reaching women and girls with different experiences and those facing intersecting inequalities;
- accessible, taking account of language, format, disability, location, timing, literacy and access to technology;
- appropriately resourced, including reasonable participation, accessibility, travel and childcare costs where relevant;
- safe and ethical, with appropriate safeguarding, confidentiality and referral arrangements;
- transparent, explaining which decisions remain open and how contributions will be considered; and
- proportionate, reflecting the scale, complexity and risks of the potential pledge.

For guidance on engaging in a survivor-centred and trauma informed way, see UN Women's safe consultations with survivors of violence against women and girls, and the GBV Area of Responsibility Helpdesk's guidance on survivor-centred approaches in humanitarian action (which is applicable to all contexts). These resources should inform consultation planning, informed consent, confidentiality, facilitation, support arrangement and survivors' influence over decisions.

Engagement methods may include targeted discussions, existing advisory or coordination groups, community consultations, roundtables, focus groups, written submissions, surveys and virtual engagement.[18] Methods should be selected according to the purpose and scale of the pledge and should take account of accessibility, confidentiality, digital exclusion, data protection and logistical feasibility.

For a focused pledge, a small number of targeted discussions may be sufficient. A complex, cross-government or national scale-up commitment may require wider engagement across sectors, population groups and levels of government. Online methods should not be relied upon exclusively where this would exclude people with limited access to technology, connectivity, privacy or digital literacy.

Engagement should explore:

- which forms and patterns of VAWG women and girls consider most urgent;
- which populations and geographical areas are underserved or disproportionately affected;
- which drivers, risks, protective factors or institutional barriers require attention;
- which existing programmes, policies, laws, services or community initiatives are effective and should be strengthened;
- where implementation, coverage, quality, enforcement, coordination or financing is inadequate;
- where a government pledge could provide clear additional value;
- whether potential priorities could create exclusion, backlash, unsafe disclosure or other unintended consequences;
- whether survivor-centred response services and referral pathways are sufficiently available and safe;
- what political, financial, workforce or institutional barriers may affect delivery; and
- which organisations should have continuing roles in design, implementation, monitoring and oversight.

It is important to remember that across countries, VAWG response services are delivered through a combination of government systems and civil society provision, including psychosocial support, health care, legal assistance, policing, protection and accompaniment through health and justice processes. Local specialist VAWG organisations and women's rights organisations are often central to this provision, particularly at community level, but frequently operate with insufficient or short-term funding. Care should therefore be taken not to add additional resource burden on civil society during the pledge-making process and where substantial involvement is required, funding may be provided.

iii. Prioritise the focus of the pledge

Evidence and stakeholder engagement may identify more potential areas for action than can credibly be included in a pledge. Governments should avoid attempting to address every aspect of VAWG through a single commitment. A focus pledge with clear political ownership, adequate resources and a credible route to implementation is likely to be more effective than an extensive list of loosely connected activities.

At this stage, governments are selecting the priority problem or implementation gap and the broad type of action required. The detailed selection of a strategy and assessment of the evidence for a particular intervention will take place in Step 3.

Potential priorities should be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Potential impact:** How widespread is the problem, and what are its consequences for women and girls?
- **Priorities of women and girls:** Is the issue considered important by affected women and girls, particularly those facing intersecting inequalities?
- **Inequality:** Would addressing the priority reduce disparities in exposure to violence or access to prevention, protection, services and justice?
- **Identified gap:** Does it address a documented gap in prevention, survivor support, justice, perpetrator accountability, evidence, financing, coordination or implementation?
- **Potential for meaningful change:** Is there a reasonable basis for expecting that government action could improve outcomes? Detailed assessment of the evidence for the proposed approach should follow in Step 3.
- **Government contribution:** Does government have a clear policy, financing, regulatory, convening or delivery role through which it can make a material contribution?

- **Additionality and alignment:** Would the pledge strengthen, accelerate, finance, implement or scale existing action, or address a gap not adequately covered by current commitments? Does it complement relevant national, regional and international frameworks?
- **Reach and depth:** Could the action reach a meaningful number of people, produce significant change for a more focused population, or strengthen the systems on which wider action depends?
- **Feasibility:** Is the broad action realistic in relation to the proposed timeframe, institutional capacity, delivery systems and political context?
- **Resources and ownership:** Is there a reasonable prospect of securing the necessary political ownership, financing, workforce, technical expertise, partnerships and institutional capacity?
- **Safety and response readiness:** Can the action be taken without exposing women and girls to disproportionate risks? Where it may increase awareness, discussion or disclosure of violence, are safe survivor-centred services and referral pathways available or capable of being strengthened as part of the pledge?

Box 4: Survivor engagement and movement-building

Meaningful survivor engagement can strengthen policy, practice and accountability, but it must be voluntary, accessible, properly resourced and survivor-centred, with safeguards for consent, confidentiality, safety and wellbeing.

Women's rights organisations, specialist VAWG organisations and survivor-led groups bring different but complementary strengths. Lived experience is essential, but should not replace rights-based, feminist and systemic analysis. Engagement should therefore value survivor insight while sustaining the leadership and expertise of established women's rights movements and keeping attention on the structural inequalities and power relations that drive VAWG.

Additionality should not be equated with creating something entirely new. Fully financing or implementing an existing law, plan, service or evidence-informed programme may represent a greater step-change than announcing a new initiative. A priority may therefore concern:

- adapting or scaling an evidence-informed intervention;
- improving the quality, reach or sustainability of an existing programme or service;
- providing new, increased or protected financing;
- implementing or enforcing an existing law or policy;
- strengthening government institutions, coordination or accountability;
- integrating VAWG prevention and response into a wider public system or sector; or
- testing and evaluating an approach where further evidence is needed.

The selected priorities should collectively form a coherent contribution to the Coalition's objectives. Where more than one pledge is proposed, governments should consider whether the pledges reinforce one another and whether the combined package remains deliverable.

iv. Record the decision and agree continued participation

The lead ministry or coordinating body should record how priorities were selected. This does not require an extensive consultation report, but there should be a transparent account of:

- the evidence and criteria used;
- the stakeholders engaged and any important perspectives that remain missing;
- the principal priorities raised by women and girls, women's rights organisations and other participants;
- the options considered;
- why the selected priority or priorities were chosen;
- how stakeholder contributions affected the decision;
- any significant concerns, disagreements or risks that remain unresolved; and
- the issues that require further evidence or targeted validation in Step 3.

Participants should be informed of the outcome and of significant changes made in response to their contributions. Where important recommendations have not been adopted, an appropriate explanation should be provided.

Consultation should also be connected to continuing participation. Governments should consider how women's rights organisations, specialist VAWG actors, affected communities and other relevant stakeholders will influence the detailed design, implementation, monitoring and oversight of the pledge. This may involve using or strengthening existing coordination structures, establishing an advisory group or ensuring representation within relevant governance arrangements. Any new mechanism should have a clear role, appropriate resources and a fair, transparent and inclusive process for selecting members.

Step 3: Select RESPECT pathways, assess the evidence and consult

Once a priority problem or implementation gap has been identified, governments should determine which evidence-informed pathways are most likely to address the problem and test this emerging choice through proportionate consultation. The RESPECT Women framework provides a shared structure for identifying possible prevention pathways through seven strategies.

Where evidence and consultation have identified gaps in the availability, accessibility, quality or safety of survivor-centred response services and referral pathways, prevention activities should be accompanied by robust measures to address those gaps. Prevention programming can increase awareness, discussion, help-seeking and disclosure of violence. Governments therefore have a responsibility to ensure that survivors who disclose violence can access timely, confidential, safe and appropriate support. The 'Services ensured' pathway within the RESPECT framework would therefore be prioritised.

i. Select relevant RESPECT pathways

The seven RESPECT strategies should guide, rather than prescribe, the selection of a pledge. Governments should use national and local evidence to determine which strategies are most relevant to the forms, drivers and patterns of violence in their context and to the particular contribution that government can make.

It is important to note that the RESPECT strategies overlap and should not be treated as separate silos. Many effective approaches combine elements from more than one strategy or address risks at more than one level. For example, an economic intervention may need to combine poverty reduction with women's empowerment and gender-transformative work. A safe-schools pledge may combine safer environments, prevention of child and adolescent abuse, transformed gender norms and functioning response and referral systems.

The choice of strategy or strategies should begin with the problem, rather than with a preferred programme or intervention. Governments should consider:

- which form or forms of VAWG the pledge will address;
- which risk factors, protective factors or implementation barriers are most relevant;
- whether these factors operate primarily at societal, community, interpersonal or individual level;
- which RESPECT strategy or combination of strategies provides the most credible pathway to change;
- whether the required action concerns an intervention, public policy, financing, institutional reform or an enabling condition for effective implementation; and
- whether the proposed pathway responds to the country's existing commitments, capacities and implementation gaps.

ii. Assess the strength and relevance of the evidence for different interventions

Governments should assess the evidence for the specific intervention or action being considered. An intervention should not be assumed to be effective simply because it falls under a RESPECT strategy. Evidence may vary by intervention type, population, setting and implementation model, and findings from one context may not transfer directly to another.

RESPECT distinguishes between interventions with different levels of supporting evidence. These classifications should inform the type and ambition of pledge that is appropriate. Although RESPECT rates interventions separately for high-income countries (HICs) and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), governments should also consider whether the evidence is relevant to their context, including whether it comes from comparable populations and settings, reflects the experiences of women and girls facing intersecting inequalities, and whether the conditions that supported effectiveness can be reproduced. Where an intervention is promising but has not been tested in the proposed context, adaptation and evaluation should form part of the pledge.

National and local evidence should be considered alongside the international evidence base. This includes evidence from national programmes, women's rights organisations, specialist services, practitioners and communities. Where local initiatives appear effective but have not been rigorously evaluated, governments may consider a pledge that combines continued delivery with stronger monitoring and evaluation rather than either dismissing the approach or committing immediately to national scale-up.

RESPECT is principally a prevention framework and its evidence base is strongest in relation to intimate partner violence and sexual violence. For pledges focused primarily on legal protection, justice, perpetrator accountability or survivor services, RESPECT should be used alongside relevant legal, human rights and essential-services standards, including CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 and the UN Essential Services Package. Such pledges should explain their contribution to the wider prevention continuum while also recognising protection, services and access to justice as rights-based obligations in their own right.

iii. Test the proposed pathway with relevant stakeholders

Before proceeding to detailed pledge design, governments should test the proposed pathway with relevant stakeholders. This is not intended to duplicate the wider engagement undertaken in Step 2. It is a focused check that the proposed response is appropriate to the problem, supported by relevant evidence and capable of being implemented safely and effectively.

The nature and extent of this engagement should be proportionate to the pledge. It may involve targeted discussions with women's rights organisations, specialist VAWG organisations, affected groups, relevant government institutions, service providers, implementers and technical experts. Existing advisory and coordination mechanisms should be used where they remain current, inclusive and appropriate.

This targeted engagement should consider:

- whether the selected strategy or combination of strategies reflects how the problem is experienced in the national and local context;
- whether relevant national, local, practice-based or community evidence has been overlooked;
- whether the proposed action is appropriate and accessible for the populations it is intended to reach;
- whether it could create safety risks, exclusion, backlash or other unintended consequences;
- whether survivor-centred services and referral pathways are available, accessible and safe;
- whether the financing, workforce, institutional capacity and partnerships needed for delivery are likely to be available;
- whether adaptation is required and which core components should be maintained; and
- what should be changed before the pledge is developed further.

Governments should document how this validation affected the selection or adaptation of the proposed pathway.

Step 4: Design the pledge and its pathway to change

The next step is to translate the selected priority and evidence-informed pathway into a focused political commitment. A pledge should be sufficiently specific to guide implementation and enable progress to be assessed, while remaining concise enough to communicate clearly. This step is broken down into three components, below.

i. Define the proposed commitment

Each pledge should answer the following questions:

- **Problem:** What evidenced form of VAWG, risk factor, protective factor, service barrier or implementation gap will be addressed?
- **Outcome:** What change is expected for women and girls, institutions, services, communities or perpetrators?
- **Action:** What will the government specifically implement, adapt, scale, finance, enforce or reform?
- **Evidence:** What evidence indicates that the proposed action can contribute to the intended change?
- **Evidence status:** Is the action ready for adaptation or scale, or should it first be piloted, refined or evaluated?
- **Pledge type:** Is this primarily a pilot, scale-up, financing, law or policy implementation, service-strengthening or institutional-reform pledge?
- **Scale and reach:** Which populations, institutions, communities or geographical areas will be reached, and at what scale?
- **Leadership:** Which government institution will be accountable for delivery?
- **Partners:** Which ministries, subnational authorities, women's rights organisations, specialist services or other actors need to contribute?
- **Resources:** What financing, workforce, infrastructure, data and technical capacity will be required?
- **Timeframe:** By when will the pledge be delivered, and what are the key interim milestones?
- **Measurement:** What starting point, implementation indicators and outcome indicators will be used to assess progress?
- **Risks:** What risks, unintended consequences or dependencies could affect implementation or the safety of women and girls?

Remember, a pledge should make a meaningful contribution beyond business as usual. This does not necessarily require creating a new programme or policy. Implementing an existing law, financing an evidence-informed national plan, improving the quality of services or expanding an effective intervention to underserved areas may provide a more significant contribution than announcing a new initiative.

ii. Establish a credible pathway from action to results

The pledge should contain a concise explanation of how and why the proposed action is expected to produce the intended change. A full theory of change is not required, but the causal pathway should be clear enough to test whether the commitment is credible.

The pathway should explain:

1. the problem, risk factor, protective factor or implementation gap being addressed;
2. the action and resources the government will provide;
3. the immediate changes in implementation, coverage, quality, capacity or access expected;
4. the intermediate changes expected in relevant behaviours, attitudes, norms, institutional practices, women's agency, relationship power, safety or access to services; and
5. how these changes are expected to contribute to preventing VAWG, preventing recurrence or improving survivors' safety, rights and recovery.

A simple formulation may be used:

Because **[identified problem, risk or implementation gap]** contributes to **[form of VAWG or barrier affecting survivors]**, the Government **[lead ministry]** will **[specific action]**, by **[date]**, reaching a **[target population]**. This is expected to produce **[immediate implementation change]**, leading to **[intermediate outcome]** and contributing to **[longer-term result]**.

The pathway should also identify the main assumptions and dependencies on which success rests. These may include the availability of survivor services, the cooperation of other ministries, the continued participation of women's rights organisations, sufficient implementation capacity or the enforcement of relevant legislation.

Where several actions form part of one pledge, governments should test whether they reinforce one another and contribute to the same outcome. A pledge should not become a collection of loosely connected activities. The RESPECT Women theory of change may be useful in this regard (page 12 and 13).

iii. Identify the delivery system, responsibilities and partnerships

Pledge design should identify not only the lead institution but also the systems, organisations and delivery structures required for implementation. This may include national and subnational government, women's rights organisations, specialist service providers, community organisations, research institutions and private-sector actors.

Relevant institutions should agree:

- the lead institution accountable for delivery;
- the specific responsibilities of participating ministries and agencies;
- how national and subnational implementation will be coordinated;
- how women's rights organisations and specialist VAWG actors will participate in implementation, decision-making and oversight;
- which existing policies, budgets and delivery systems can be used or strengthened;

- what information-sharing, safeguarding and referral arrangements are needed; and
- how implementation barriers will be escalated and resolved.

Where possible, pledges should strengthen and use existing national and subnational systems rather than create parallel structures. Partnerships with women's rights organisations and specialist services should be equitable, appropriately resourced and based on recognition of their expertise and sustained contribution.

Step 5: Test safety, feasibility and enabling conditions

Before a pledge is approved, governments should test whether the proposed action can be delivered safely, equitably and with sufficient quality. This step should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of the pledge. A focused commitment may require a short, structured review, while a major scale-up or cross-government reform may require more detailed assessment.

i. Apply the guiding principles

The proposed pledge should be reviewed against the principles set out in Section 2 of this document. In particular, governments should consider whether it:

- puts women's safety first and anticipates possible harm;
- maintains an explicit focus on gender inequality and women's human rights;
- addresses the circumstances of marginalised and underserved women and girls;
- is informed by safe and meaningful participation;
- is supported by a credible pathway of change and relevant evidence;
- connects prevention with survivor-centred services and referral pathways;
- takes account of risks and protective factors across the life course; and
- uses combined action where this is necessary to address multiple drivers of violence.

Where the review identifies significant risks or weaknesses, the pledge should be revised before approval.

ii. Address intersecting inequalities, barriers and changing forms of violence

Governments should assess whether underserved or excluded women and girls will benefit from the proposed action and whether the pledge could widen inequalities even if it improves overall coverage.

This should include consideration of:

- physical, financial, linguistic, communication, geographical and digital accessibility;
- barriers created by eligibility, identification, immigration, reporting or documentation requirements;
- the safety and appropriateness of data collection and disaggregation;
- how marginalised women and girls will participate in implementation and monitoring;
- whether targeted measures are required alongside universal provision; and
- whether the financing allocated is sufficient to address accessibility and inclusion.

Pledges should also reflect the settings and means through which VAWG is perpetrated, including homes, schools, workplaces, public spaces, institutions, humanitarian and conflict settings and digital environments. Technology-facilitated VAWG should be considered alongside related offline violence. Governments should assess whether the proposed action will remain relevant and deliverable during conflict, displacement, disaster or other emergencies. Relevant sources of information on VAWG and gender equality are listed in Annex 1.

iii. Assess the enabling conditions

Evidence-informed interventions will not achieve their intended results if the wider conditions needed for delivery are absent. Governments should identify which enabling conditions are essential to the proposed pledge and whether they are already in place. For more information, see RESPECT Women: Strengthening the Enabling Environment for VAWG Prevention

The assessment should consider:

- **Political commitment:** Do senior political and institutional leaders support the pledge and have the authority to drive implementation?
- **Women's rights leadership and participation:** Are women's rights organisations and specialist VAWG actors able to influence, support and scrutinise implementation, and are they adequately resourced to do so?
- **Laws, policies and enforcement:** Are appropriate laws and policies in place, and are the institutions responsible for implementation and enforcement able and willing to act?
- **Financing and institutional capacity:** Are sufficient financing, workforce, technical expertise, data systems and infrastructure available?
- **Survivor services and referral pathways:** Can women and girls who seek help or disclose violence access timely, confidential, safe and appropriate support?
- **Emergency preparedness:** Can essential survivor services and referral arrangements continue during conflict, displacement, disasters and other emergencies?
- **Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment:** Where the pledge relates to humanitarian or development delivery, are appropriate PSEAH standards, reporting mechanisms and accountability arrangements in place?

Not every condition will be equally relevant to every pledge. The assessment should focus on those that are necessary for the selected action. Where an essential condition is absent, the pledge should include action to establish it, be sequenced so that implementation does not begin prematurely, or be reconsidered.

iv. Test adaptation and scale

Where a pledge involves adapting or scaling an intervention, governments should establish whether the intervention is ready for expansion and how effectiveness and safety will be maintained.

The assessment should consider:

- whether the evidence supports scale-up or indicates that further piloting is needed;
- which core principles, components and minimum levels of intensity or duration must be maintained;
- what should be adapted to reflect local language, culture, institutions, patterns of violence and available resources;
- whether implementers have sufficient capacity, supervision and time to deliver the intervention with quality;
- whether the intervention can be integrated into existing systems without weakening its essential components;
- the full costs of implementation, quality assurance, monitoring and sustainability;
- whether complementary strategies or services are required; and
- how adaptation and scale-up will be documented, monitored and evaluated.

Where effectiveness in the proposed context has not been established, governments should start at an appropriate scale, document the adaptation and evaluate it before committing to wider expansion. Scaling an intervention should mean expanding effective delivery and outcomes, not merely increasing the number of participants reached.

Step 6: Commit, resource, implement, monitor and learn

The final step is to secure formal political and financial backing and put in place proportionate arrangements for implementation, monitoring, accountability and learning. These arrangements should be sufficiently clear before the pledge is announced to demonstrate that the commitment is deliverable.

i. Secure political ownership, governance and coordination

A pledge should be formally owned by a government institution with the mandate and authority to lead implementation. Political approval should be accompanied by clear institutional responsibility rather than relying solely on a public announcement.

Before approval, governments should confirm:

- the lead institution accountable for implementation;
- the role of each participating ministry, agency and level of government;
- the governance or coordination mechanism that will review progress and resolve barriers;
- how women's rights organisations and other relevant stakeholders will participate in implementation and oversight;
- how the pledge will be reflected in relevant national, sectoral or subnational plans and budgets; and
- who has authority to adapt implementation if monitoring identifies inadequate progress or unintended harm.

Where the pledge requires action across government, the coordination mechanism should be sufficiently senior to secure cooperation and address institutional blockages. It should be supported by a properly resourced technical function capable of coordinating day-to-day implementation.

ii. Finance and resource implementation

Each pledge should identify the financing and other resources required for delivery. This should include not only programme expenditure, but also the workforce, institutional capacity, infrastructure, coordination, data, monitoring and quality-assurance arrangements on which implementation depends.

The resourcing plan should specify:

- the estimated resources required;
- the anticipated source and duration of funding;
- whether financing is new, increased, reallocated or protected;
- how allocations, disbursements and expenditure will be tracked;
- resources required at national and subnational levels;
- investment in implementation capacity, supervision and workforce development;
- resources for monitoring, evaluation and learning;
- the costs of accessibility, safeguarding and survivor-centred delivery; and
- sustainable and proportionate funding for women's rights organisations and specialist organisations contributing to delivery, services, accountability or movement-building.

iii. Monitor implementation, outcomes, unintended consequences and learning

Every pledge should include a proportionate monitoring and accountability approach. The purpose is to establish whether the promised action is being implemented, whether it is producing the expected changes and whether any unintended or harmful consequences are emerging.

Monitoring should distinguish between three levels of progress:

- **Implementation indicators:** These assess whether the commitment is being delivered as intended. They may cover financing and expenditure, activities completed, geographical coverage, populations reached, accessibility, implementation quality, staff capacity, intervention intensity or dosage, fidelity to core components and service quality.
- **Intermediate outcomes:** These assess the changes expected to contribute to the pledge's longer-term objective. Depending on the pledge, they may include changes in gender attitudes and norms, women's agency and autonomy, power within relationships, institutional practices, education and economic security, safety, service availability and access, reporting experiences or justice-system performance.
- **Long-term outcomes:** These assess the ultimate change to which the pledge is intended to contribute, including reductions in the relevant forms of VAWG or repeat violence and improvements in survivors' safety, rights and recovery.

Each pledge should identify:

- a baseline or clearly defined starting point;
- proportionate milestones and targets;
- the indicators and sources of information to be used;
- the institution responsible for collecting, analysing and validating information;
- arrangements for safe and appropriate data disaggregation and management;
- how expenditure will be monitored;
- how women's rights organisations, survivors and affected communities will contribute to monitoring and learning;
- how and when progress will be communicated, including public reporting where this is an agreed Coalition or national requirement;
- any proportionate independent oversight arrangements; and
- how evidence will be used to improve or adapt implementation.

Population-level measurement of changes in VAWG prevalence may not be feasible or proportionate for every pledge. Where such measurement is not possible, governments should use the strongest available implementation and intermediate outcome indicators and avoid attributing changes in violence directly to the pledge without sufficient evidence. Existing national surveys and administrative systems should be used where they provide suitable and reliable information.

Interventions should be evaluated before further scale-up where their effectiveness in the proposed context has not been established. Scale-up should then be monitored continuously to assess implementation quality, effectiveness and unintended or harmful outcomes. Governments should share learning about challenges and approaches that have not worked as intended, as well as successes, so that pledges can be strengthened over time.

Box 5: Stress-testing your pledges

Before approval, test the pledge for:

- ✓ **Impact:** is it likely to make a meaningful contribution to ending VAWG?
- ✓ **Additionality:** does it go materially beyond existing action?
- ✓ **Equity and safety:** who benefits, who may be excluded and what unintended harms could arise?
- ✓ **Feasibility:** are the timeframe, financing, workforce, systems and political conditions realistic?
- ✓ **Sustainability:** can the action survive political, fiscal or crisis-related changes and become embedded in national systems?
- ✓ **Measurability:** does the pledge include clear indicators and targets for measuring progress, and is funding allocated to monitoring and reporting?

Before a pledge proceeds to political approval and announcement, the lead institution should be able to confirm that the problem and intended population are evidenced; the proposed action and pathway to results are credible; affected women and girls and relevant organisations have influenced the design; responsibilities, financing and delivery conditions are defined; safety, inclusion and unintended effects have been assessed; and proportionate monitoring, reporting and oversight arrangements are in place. The pledge development template in Annex 2 can be used to record this information.

Remember: Funding can itself be the pledge!

A lack of financing remains one of the most persistent barriers to translating commitments on VAWG into action. Governments have adopted laws, strategies and national action plans, but these do not automatically result in adequately funded prevention, services or justice responses. Although comparable data on national VAWG expenditure remains limited, UN Women identified that fully costed national action plans, stronger domestic financing and sustained investment among the priorities for closing the implementation gap globally.[19] Chronic underfunding - estimated at a $420 billion annual shortfall in developing regions - undermines existing legal frameworks and stalls progress.[20]

In terms of international financing, as of 2025 just 4% of aid overall was allocated to gender equality programmes and less than 1% of total Official Development Assistance went towards programmes to end VAWG.[21] UN Women's 2025 assessment of 428 women's rights and civil society organisations found that funding cuts were already forcing organisations to reduce or close services, prevention programmes and advocacy; around 1 in 3 had suspended or closed programmes addressing violence against women. Nearly 6 in 10 organisations in humanitarian settings reported reaching fewer women and girls than they did before January 2025, having reduced their services by anywhere from less than 30 per cent to a complete cessation. As a result, nearly one million women and girls who once received support are no longer being reached. Almost half of respondents have introduced waiting lists or been forced to turn women and girls away.[22]

Against this backdrop, a pledge to provide new, additional or protected financing should be regarded as a substantive VAWG pledge in its own right. A government does not necessarily need another policy if an existing, evidence-based national plan cannot be implemented because it is inadequately financed.

Funding pledges can address different parts of the financing gap. They could, for example:

- provide new or increased domestic financing to implement costed national or subnational VAWG plans;

- establish or increase dedicated budget lines for evidence-based prevention, essential survivor services, justice and perpetrator accountability;
- provide predictable, multi-year funding to women's rights organisations, specialist VAWG organisations and survivor-led organisations;
- increase the proportion of international development or humanitarian assistance directed to preventing and responding to VAWG;
- protect existing VAWG expenditure from wider budget or aid reductions;
- finance the workforce, institutional capacity, data and infrastructure required to implement existing commitments;
- invest in underfunded forms of VAWG, populations or geographical settings; *or*
- fund research and evaluation where important evidence gaps prevent effective action.[23]

A strong financing pledge should specify how much is being committed, whether the funding is additional, how long it will be available, what and whom it will fund, and how commitments and disbursements will be tracked. Where funding is provided to civil society, governments and donors should consider direct, flexible and core funding, alongside proportionate reporting requirements, so that organisations have the institutional capacity to deliver safely and sustainably.

Civil society and women's rights organisations are central to VAWG prevention and response globally, and in many contexts are the principal providers and first responders for specialist survivor services. Adequate and sustainable financing for these organisations is therefore critical to maintaining both service provision and wider prevention and accountability efforts.

Funding should not be judged as less ambitious than a policy or programme pledge simply because it finances action rather than creating something new. In a context of chronic and increasing underinvestment, financing existing evidence-based commitments at sufficient scale and for sufficient duration may itself represent the step-change required.

4. Worked examples of credible pledges

The following examples show how a broad political intention can be developed into a specific, evidence-informed and deliverable pledge. They are not prescribed commitments. Governments should adapt the form, scale, targets, timeframe and indicators to national and local evidence, institutional responsibilities, available resources and the views of women and girls and women's rights organisations.

The figures and bracketed fields are illustrative. They should be replaced by context-specific information. Each example demonstrates a different pledge type and identifies the relevant RESPECT pathway, evidence considerations, delivery conditions and measures of progress. A short, blank, template is provided for Governments in Annex 2.

Example 1: Scale and evidence-informed community mobilisation intervention

Example initial pledge: We will expand community programmes to change harmful attitudes and prevent VAWG.

Why this could be strengthened: The statement does not identify the intervention, evidence, population, geographical coverage, scale, responsible institution, financing, delivery standards, timeframe or intended results. It assumes that awareness-raising or short-term activities will change the norms and power relations that sustain violence.

Illustrative stronger pledge: Based on evidence that the acceptance of violence and unequal gendered power contribute to intimate partner violence in **[priority locations and populations]**, **[lead ministry or institution]** will, by **[date]**, expand **[named evidence-informed community mobilisation intervention]** from **[baseline coverage]** to **[target coverage]**, reaching **[population]** through sustained, participatory programming of the intensity and duration required by the intervention model.

Pathway to change: Delivery will be undertaken with **[women's rights organisations and local implementation partners]**, supported by **[financing, workforce and technical resources]**. Safe referral pathways and survivor-centred services will be in place in participating communities. Progress will be reported at **[agreed intervals]**, and effectiveness and unintended effects will be evaluated before further expansion. The pledge draws on the RESPECT strategies: **T**ransformed attitudes, beliefs and norms and **R**elationship skills strengthened.

Table 1: Summary logic - scale and evidence-informed community mobilisation intervention

Element	What the pledge should specify
Pledge type	Adaptation and scale-up.
Pathway to change	Sustained community mobilisation challenges the acceptance of violence and unequal power while strengthening equitable, respectful and non-violent relationships.
Delivery and financing	Identify the lead institution, implementing organisations, multi-year financing, facilitator capacity, supervision, required dosage, contextual adaptation and core components that must be maintained.
Implementation indicators	Locations reached; participants reached and retained; intensity and duration; facilitator competence; implementation quality; referral functionality; expenditure against budget.
Intermediate outcomes	Changes in attitudes, perceived social expectations, willingness to intervene, women's agency and relationship power.
Long-term outcomes	Reductions in the relevant forms of intimate partner or sexual violence, where measurement is feasible, safe and proportionate.
Risks and safeguards	Monitor backlash, retaliation, unsafe disclosure, exclusion and unintended changes during adaptation. Women's rights organisations and affected communities should participate in oversight and learning.

Example 2: Combine social protection with women's empowerment and gender-transformative programming

Example initial pledge: We will provide cash transfers to women to prevent domestic violence.

Why this could be strengthened: Cash or economic support should not automatically be assumed to prevent violence. Effects vary according to programme design, household dynamics and context. Economic interventions may produce benefits, no effect or unintended risks if women's control over resources, household conflict and possible backlash are not addressed.

Illustrative stronger pledge: Based on evidence that poverty, economic insecurity and women's limited control over resources increase vulnerability to intimate partner violence in **[population and locations]**, **[social-protection authority]**, working with **[gender or VAWG lead institution and women's rights organisations]**, will by **[date]** integrate a gender-transformative and survivor-safe component into **[named social-protection programme]**, reaching **[target population]**.

Pathway to change: It will strengthen women's access to and control over resources, address household power and relationship dynamics, provide safe information and referral, and monitor risks including financial control. **[Financing source]** will support implementation and evaluation for **[duration]**. Further scale-up will depend on evidence of safety, implementation quality and outcomes in the proposed context. The pledge draws on the RESPECT strategies: **P**overty reduced, **E**mpowerment of women and, where relevant, **T**ransformed attitudes, beliefs and norms.

Table 2: Summary logic - combine social protection with women's empowerment and gender-transformative programming

Element	What the pledge should specify
Pledge type	System integration, pilot or scale-up, depending on the evidence for the specific package and context.
Pathway to change	Improved economic security and control over resources can reduce financial stress and dependence. Gender-transformative components can address unequal power and help manage risks created by changing economic roles.
Delivery and financing	Define collaboration between social-protection and VAWG institutions, payment design, participant safety, facilitator capacity, service referral, financing and data-protection arrangements.
Implementation indicators	People reached; continuity and timeliness of payments; participation in complementary components; control over resources; referral availability; implementation quality and expenditure.

Intermediate outcomes	Women's economic agency and decision-making; household economic security; equitable relationship power; reduced acceptance of violence; service access.
Long-term outcomes	Changes in the relevant forms of intimate partner violence, where evaluation is feasible and appropriate.
Risks and safeguards	Assess household conflict, financial abuse, exclusion, digital access, coercion and backlash before and throughout implementation. Provide confidential routes to support.

Example 3: Prevent violence through safe and inclusive education systems

Example initial pledge: We will introduce a zero-tolerance policy on violence in schools.

Why this could be strengthened: A policy statement alone does not change school environments, adult behaviour, peer norms or reporting and response systems. It may increase reporting without ensuring that children who disclose violence receive safe and appropriate support.

Illustrative stronger pledge: Based on evidence of **[forms and patterns of school-related gender-based violence]** affecting **[groups and locations]**, **[ministry of education]** will, by **[date]**, implement a whole-school violence-prevention and response model in **[number or proportion of schools]**, reaching **[number of learners]**.

Pathway to change: It will strengthen women's access to and control over resources, address household power and relationship dynamics, provide safe information and referral, and monitor risks including financial control. **[Financing source]** will support implementation and evaluation for **[duration]**. Further scale-up will depend on evidence of safety, implementation quality and outcomes in the proposed context. The pledge draws on the RESPECT strategies: **P**overty reduced, **E**mpowerment of women and, where relevant, **T**ransformed attitudes, beliefs and norms.

Table 3: Summary logic - prevent violence through safe and inclusive education systems

Element	What the pledge should specify
Pledge type	Institutional reform and phased implementation or scale-up.
Pathway to change	Coordinated action on curriculum, staff behaviour, school governance, physical safety, peer norms, reporting and response can reduce risk and strengthen protective environments.
Delivery and financing	Define responsibilities across national, subnational and school levels; safeguarding standards; teacher and leader support; links with health, child protection and specialist VAWG services; and recurrent financing.
Implementation indicators	Schools meeting minimum standards; staff trained and supervised; learners reached; reporting mechanisms functioning; referrals completed safely; budget spent; quality and fidelity.

Intermediate outcomes	Learners' knowledge and attitudes; perceptions of safety; confidence in reporting; staff practice; school climate; service access.
Long-term outcomes	Reductions in the relevant forms of school-related gender-based violence, where safe and proportionate measurement is possible.
Risks and safeguards	Increased disclosure without adequate response, retaliation, breaches of confidentiality, exclusion of children with disabilities or out-of-school children, and punitive responses that harm survivors.

Example 4: Finance and implement an existing VAWG law or justice commitment

Example initial pledge: We will strengthen legislation and take tougher action against perpetrators.

Why this could be strengthened: The statement does not identify the legal or implementation gap, responsible institutions, resourcing, survivor protections or measures of justice-system performance. Adopting or amending legislation will have limited effect if police, prosecutors, courts, legal-aid providers and services lack the capacity or resources to implement it.

Illustrative stronger pledge: To address documented gaps in the implementation of **[named law or policy]**, **[lead justice institution]**, working with **[police, prosecution, courts, legal-aid, service and women's rights organisation partners]**, will by **[date]** deliver and finance a costed implementation plan covering **[specified jurisdictions or institutions]**.

Pathway to change: The pledge will establish or strengthen survivor-centred procedures, specialist capacity, supervision, legal assistance, protection measures, case management and accountability for discriminatory or harmful practice. **[Government]** will provide **[new, increased or protected financing]** for **[duration]**, track allocations, disbursements and expenditure, and publish progress at **[agreed intervals]**. Women's rights organisations and affected communities will have an appropriate role in oversight and learning. The pledge draws on the RESPECT strategies: **S**ervices ensured as well as the UN Essential Services Package and applicable human rights standards.

Table 4: Summary logic - finance and implement an existing VAWG law or justice commitment

Element	What the pledge should specify
Pledge type	Law or policy implementation, institutional reform and financing.
Framework	Use CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35, the UN Essential Services Package and applicable national and regional legal standards. RESPECT may inform the wider prevention pathway but should not be treated as the sole standard for justice reform.

Pathway to change	Adequate financing, clear procedures, institutional capacity, safe access and oversight can improve implementation, reduce attrition and secondary victimisation, and strengthen perpetrator accountability and survivor remedies.
Delivery and financing	Define each institution's responsibilities and authority; cost the implementation plan; identify the source and duration of funding; establish coordination, workforce, supervision and data arrangements.
Implementation indicators	Funding allocated and disbursed; institutions applying agreed procedures; workforce coverage and supervision; availability of legal aid and protection measures; case-management quality.
Intermediate outcomes	Safer access to justice; timeliness; reduced case attrition; appropriate use of protection measures; survivor experience; increased institutional compliance and accountability.
Long-term outcomes	Improved accountability, protection and access to remedy. Changes in prevalence should not be attributed to justice reform without an appropriate evaluation design.

Example 5: Expand and sustainably finance survivor-centred services and referral pathways

Example initial pledge: We will improve support services for survivors of VAWG.

Why this could be strengthened: The statement does not specify which services will be strengthened, where gaps exist, who will be reached, the standards services must meet, how provision will be financed or how improved access and quality will be assessed.

Illustrative stronger pledge: In response to evidence that women and girls in **[underserved populations and locations]** cannot access timely, safe and appropriate support, **[lead ministry or coordinating body]** will, by **[date]**, guarantee access to a defined minimum package of survivor-centred health, psychosocial, social, police and legal support across **[target coverage]**.

Pathway to change: [Government] will provide **[new, increased or protected multi-year financing]**, including sustainable funding for specialist community-based services and women's rights organisations. The pledge will establish accessible referral pathways, minimum quality and confidentiality standards, trained personnel, safe data practices and arrangements to maintain essential services during conflict, displacement, disasters or other emergencies. Progress will be reported at **[agreed intervals]**, with survivors and women's rights organisations contributing safely to service improvement and oversight. The pledge draws on the RESPECT strategies: **S**ervices ensured as well as the UN Essential Services Package and applicable human rights standards

Table 5: Summary logic - expand and sustainably finance survivor-centred services and referral pathways

Element	What the pledge should specify
Pledge type	Service expansion, institutional reform and financing.

Framework	RESPECT Services ensured, the UN Essential Services Package and applicable health, legal, humanitarian and human rights standards. Service access is a rights-based obligation as well as part of the prevention continuum.
Pathway to change	Sustainable financing, accessible quality services and functioning referrals enable survivors to obtain protection, care, justice and support for recovery, and can reduce further harm and repeat violence.
Delivery and financing	Specify the minimum package, service locations, eligibility, operating arrangements, responsible agencies, referral protocols, workforce, quality assurance, multi-year financing and funding arrangements for women's rights organisations.
Implementation indicators	Funding allocated, disbursed and reaching providers; service and workforce coverage; accessibility; waiting times; completed referrals; compliance with quality and confidentiality standards; emergency continuity arrangements.
Intermediate outcomes	Timely and equitable service access; survivor-reported safety and experience; continuity of support; increased availability in underserved areas; improved coordination.
Long-term outcomes	Survivor recovery, safety, autonomy and reduced repeat violence where these outcomes can be measured ethically. Service-reporting figures should not be used as prevalence measures.

Joint and internationally coordinated pledges

Coalition members may choose to make a joint pledge where coordinated government action would provide greater value than separate national commitments. This may be particularly relevant to humanitarian crises, conflict-related sexual violence, cross-border displacement, migration and trafficking, technology-facilitated VAWG and the gendered consequences of climate change.

A joint pledge should identify:

- the participating governments and the shared problem or implementation gap;
- the population, locations and forms of violence addressed;
- each government's responsibilities and the mechanism for coordination;
- the relevant RESPECT pathway and any complementary legal, humanitarian or essential-services standards;
- the financing, institutional capacity, information-sharing and delivery arrangements;
- safeguards concerning survivor safety, confidentiality, data protection and cross-border referral;
- implementation and outcome indicators that can be assessed consistently; and
- arrangements for collective reporting, oversight and learning.

Joint commitments should remain specific and operational. A general statement of international solidarity is not a credible pledge unless it identifies the action that governments will take, the resources and responsibilities involved, the timeframe and how progress will be assessed.

5. Conclusion

Ending violence against women and girls requires sustained political commitment. Well-designed pledges can help governments focus effort, resources and accountability on the actions most likely to make a difference. This guidance provides a proportionate process for developing credible and actionable pledges, from identifying a priority problem or implementation gap through to implementation and accountability. It supports governments to design pledges that are grounded in evidence, informed by the views of women and girls and relevant stakeholders, aligned with relevant RESPECT pathways, and underpinned by a clear rationale of how the proposed action will contribute to change. For pledges focused primarily on legal protection, justice, perpetrator accountability or survivor services, RESPECT should be used alongside applicable human rights, legal and essential-services standards.

A strong pledge should be ambitious but realistic. It should specify the action to be taken, the population and location to be reached, the intended scale and results, the institution responsible, the timeframe, and the financing and delivery arrangements. It should also demonstrate that the necessary enabling conditions are in place, including institutional capacity, equitable partnerships, survivor-centred services and referral pathways, and safeguards against exclusion, backlash and unintended harm. Additionality does not necessarily require a new initiative. Properly financing, implementing, improving or scaling an existing evidence-informed law, policy, service or programme may provide a greater contribution than announcing something new.

The depth of analysis, consultation, planning, costing and evaluation should reflect the pledge's scale, complexity and potential risks. Governments should select a small number of commitments capable of generating meaningful change and establish proportionate arrangements for monitoring implementation, assessing outcomes, reporting progress and learning. Evidence, consultation and monitoring should be used to revisit assumptions and adapt delivery where necessary.

The announcement of a pledge is therefore the beginning of an accountability and implementation process, rather than its conclusion. By translating political ambition into focused, evidence-informed, survivor-centred and adequately resourced action, government pledges can strengthen national and collective efforts to prevent VAWG, protect and support survivors, improve access to justice and hold perpetrators and institutions accountable.

Annex 1: Core frameworks and data sources for pledge development

This annex provides a reference point for governments developing pledges. It is not a checklist and governments are not expected to review every framework or data source listed. They should use the national, regional and international standards and evidence directly relevant to the proposed pledge.

Core international and regional frameworks

Pledges should align with applicable international human rights obligations, regional instruments and national laws and policies. The frameworks below perform different functions. RESPECT Women provides an evidence-informed framework for prevention, while legal protection, justice and survivor-service pledges should also draw on the relevant human rights and essential-services standards.

Table 6: Core international and regional frameworks

Framework	Relevance to pledge development	When to use it
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35	Establish state obligations relating to prevention, protection, justice, services, reparation, equality and due diligence.	All pledges, with particular relevance to law, justice, service and institutional-reform commitments.
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action	Provides the principal global political framework for advancing gender equality and addressing VAWG across law, policy, services, prevention, data and institutions.	All pledges.
Sustainable Development Goals	Provide internationally agreed targets and indicators, including Targets 5.2, 5.3 and 16.2, and connect VAWG with health, education, poverty, inequality and justice.	Aligning intended results and identifying relevant longer-term indicators.
RESPECT Women: preventing violence against women, second edition	Provides seven evidence-informed prevention strategies, guiding principles, evidence classifications and implementation considerations.	Prevention pledges and consideration of the wider prevention continuum.
UN Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence	Sets standards for coordinated, survivor-centred health, social, police and justice services and for governance and costing.	Service, health, policing, justice and referral-system pledges.
Women, Peace and Security resolutions and the UN Framework for the	Address prevention, participation, protection, survivor support and accountability in conflict and crisis settings.	Pledges concerning conflict, humanitarian emergencies, peacebuilding or conflict-related sexual violence.

Prevention of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence		
Applicable regional instruments	Translate international obligations into regional legal and implementation standards. Relevant instruments include the Convention of Belém do Pará, Maputo Protocol, Istanbul Convention, ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women and relevant regional trafficking instruments.	According to the country, region, legal status and subject of the pledge.
Applicable intersecting standards	Provide more detailed requirements concerning specific populations, settings or forms of violence. These include the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, joint CEDAW and CRC guidance on harmful practices, Palermo Protocol on trafficking, ILO Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190 and UN Women guidance on technology-facilitated VAWG.	Where relevant to the population, setting, sector or form of violence being addressed.

Governments are not expected to undertake a new review of every international instrument when developing a pledge. They should identify the global and regional obligations and standards directly relevant to the proposed commitment and ensure that the pledge supports, rather than conflicts with, those obligations. Where the legal status or applicability of an instrument differs between countries, this should be checked as part of the proportionate evidence review.

A guide to data sources

Governments should begin with existing international, national and subnational evidence. Developing a pledge does not normally require a new prevalence survey or a comprehensive national evidence review. The evidence should be sufficient to:

- identify and justify the problem or implementation gap;
- understand which women and girls are affected and how experiences differ;
- assess existing commitments, services, programmes, expenditure and implementation;
- establish an appropriate starting point or baseline where available; and
- determine what further evidence should be collected during implementation.

No single source will provide a complete picture. Evidence should be triangulated across population-based surveys, administrative systems, budget and institutional information, qualitative research and evidence from women's rights organisations, specialist services and affected communities.
Population-based surveys can *estimate* prevalence, while police, health, justice, helpline and service data show only cases that reach those systems. Administrative reporting should not be treated as a measure of prevalence.

An increase in reporting may reflect increased violence, but may also indicate improved awareness, access, trust or recording. A reduction may reflect less violence, but may also indicate deteriorating access or confidence. Similarly, survey questions about individual attitudes can indicate aspects of the normative environment but do not, on their own, measure the social expectations, sanctions and power relations that constitute social norms.

Table 7: National sources of information

Source	What it can contribute
National statistical offices, national VAWG surveys and official SDG reporting	National and subnational prevalence, demographic and inequality data, where available.
Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys	Evidence on intimate partner violence where relevant modules are included, harmful practices, attitudes, decision-making and violence experienced in childhood and adolescence.
National administrative and budget systems	Police reports, investigations, prosecutions, case attrition and outcomes; health and social-service contacts; helpline and shelter use; protection orders; expenditure, allocations and disbursement; workforce and service coverage.
National and local qualitative and participatory evidence	Research and analysis by women's rights organisations, feminist movements, survivor-led organisations, practitioners and communities; social-norms assessments; evidence concerning populations poorly represented in household surveys.
Laws, policies, plans, service standards and implementation reviews	Evidence of existing commitments, responsibilities, implementation gaps and opportunities to finance, strengthen or scale action.

Table 8: Global sources to supplement national information

Source	Principal use
WHO Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates 2023	Harmonised national, regional and global estimates of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. Particularly useful where recent national estimates are unavailable. Modelled estimates should not replace more detailed national evidence.
UN Women Global Database on Violence against Women and UN Women Data Hub	Country information on laws, policies, services, institutional mechanisms and gender-related indicators. Check the original source and date of each measure.

United Nations SDG Data Portal	Officially reported indicators relating to violence, harmful practices and relevant gender equality outcomes. Coverage and timeliness vary.
UNFPA kNOwVAWdata	Technical guidance on the safe collection, interpretation and use of VAW prevalence data, with particular regional resources for Asia and the Pacific.

Table 9: Additional sources of information

Area	Illustrative sources
Discriminatory laws, institutions and gender inequalities	OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index, World Bank Gender Data Portal and relevant national legal or policy reviews.
Attitudes and social norms	UNDP Gender Social Norms Index, World Values Survey and national or local social-norms research. These sources should not be treated as direct measures of violence.
Femicide or gender-related killings	UNODC Data Portal on gender-related killings of women and girls and national homicide and criminal-justice data. Comparability is affected by legal definitions and recording practices.
Adolescent girls and intersections with violence against children	VACS, DHS, MICS, education data and national child-protection evidence. Analysis should retain a gendered and life-course perspective.
Marginalised and underserved groups	Disaggregated national data and evidence from representative organisations, specialist services and affected communities. Particular attention may be required for women and girls with disabilities, older women, displaced and migrant women, institutionalised populations, women in conflict-affected areas and people whose gender identity or sexual orientation exposes them to violence or exclusion.

The analysis completed here should inform the identification of priorities in Steps 1 and 2 and the selection of a RESPECT pathway in Step 3. Baselines and indicators should be revisited when the monitoring arrangements are developed in Step 6.

Annex 2: Pledge development template

This template supports governments to develop a focused, credible and measurable pledge. It is not intended to replace a national VAWG strategy or require new research, mapping or consultation where relevant and current information already exists.

Responses should be proportionate to the scale, complexity and risks of the pledge. Governments may refer to existing plans, budgets or monitoring frameworks rather than reproducing detailed information here. This template should be used alongside Section 3 and Section 4 of the guidance.

Pledge summary

Element	Government response
Problem and priority population	*[What specific form of VAWG, risk factor, protective factor or implementation gap will the pledge address? Who is affected, and where?]*
Evidence and pathway	*[What evidence supports the proposed action? Which RESPECT strategies or complementary standards does it draw on? Does the evidence support piloting, adaptation, implementation or scale-up?]*
Government commitment	*[What will the government implement, finance, scale, enforce or reform? What will this add to or change in existing policy or practice?]*
Scope and timeframe	*[What population, locations or institutions will be reached? What is the current baseline, the intended target and the date for achievement?]*
Leadership, delivery and financing	*[Which institution is accountable? Which partners will support delivery? What financing, workforce, technical capacity and coordination are required?]*
Pathway to results	*[What immediate change will the action produce? What outcome should follow, and what longer-term result will it contribute to?]*
Measurement and learning	*[Which indicators will measure implementation and outcomes? What data sources, reporting arrangements and resources for monitoring or evaluation will be used?]*
Risks, safeguards and accountability	*[What risks or unintended consequences could arise? What safeguards, referral arrangements, oversight and review mechanisms will be in place? Who was consulted, and how did this influence the pledge?]*

Short pledge statement

Based on evidence that **[problem, risk factor or implementation gap]** contributes to **[form of VAWG or barrier affecting survivors]** among **[population and location]**, **[lead government institution]** will, by **[date]**, **[specific action]**, increasing or improving **[baseline]** to **[target]**.

The pledge contributes to **[objective]** and draws on **[relevant RESPECT strategy or strategies and any complementary standards]**. Delivery will be supported by **[government institutions, women's rights organisations and other partners]** and financed through **[funding source and duration]**. Progress will be assessed through **[principal implementation and outcome indicators]**, with **[key safeguards, oversight and learning arrangements]** in place.

Endnotes

[1] World Health Organisation (2023) *Violence against women prevalence estimates*; World Health Organisation (2023) *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*. World Health Organisation.

[2] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2022) *Gender-related Killings of Women and Girls (Femicide/ Feminicide) as cited in Together for prevention: Handbook on multisectoral national action plans to prevent violence against women and girls*

[3] UN Women (2023) *Femicides in 2023*

[4] UN Women (2023) *Closing the Gender Gap in Humanitarian Action* as cited in The Equality Institute and UN Women (2023) *Together for Prevention: Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls*

[5] CARE (2018) *Counting the Cost: The Price Society Pays for Violence Against Women.* CARE International.

[6] Ashe, S., Duvvury, N., Raghavendra, S., Scriver, S., and O'Donovan, D. (2016) *Costs of Violence Against Women: An Examination of the Evidence*.

[7] Greene et al (2020) *Intergenerational effects of childhood maltreatment: A systematic review of the parenting practices of adult survivors of childhood abuse, neglect, and violence*

[8] Greene et al (2020) *Intergenerational effects of childhood maltreatment: A systematic review of the parenting practices of adult survivors of childhood abuse, neglect, and violence*

[9] IPU Survey of 519 MPs in Argentina, Benin, Italy, Malaysia and the Netherlands. Bergia, A. and Weinberg, A. (2026) *When the public turns hostile: Political violence against parliamentarians,* Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

[10] GBV Funders Forum (2026) *Gender-based Violence and Democracy: Exploring the Linkages* (Forthcoming)

[11] What Works (2025) *Getting Back on Track with SDG 5: Seven actions to eliminate violence against women and girls.*

[12] UNFPA (N.d.) *Technology-facilitated Gender-based Violence*

[13] Guiding principles have been adapted from a number of sources, including: FCDO's own guidance to coalition members; RESPECT Women; 2024 Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children pledging guidance; CEDAW general recommendation 35; UN Women Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women; and Together for Prevention Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls.

[14] These five tests are a synthesis developed for this guidance rather than a separately established international framework. They draw on existing Coalition guidance and relevant international resources, including the national pledge guidance developed for the Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children, UN Women's Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women, and UN Women and the Equality Institute's Together for Prevention.

[15] This section has been informed by: The Equality Institute and UN Women (2023) *Together for Prevention: Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls*

[16] Summarised from: SDDirect (2026) *GEDSI Mainstreaming in practice: safety, integrity and social justice*

[17] Adapted from, The Equality Institute and UNWOMEN (2023) *Together for Prevention: Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls*

[18] Adapted from, The Equality Institute and UNWOMEN (2023) *Together for Prevention: Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls*

[19] UNWOMEN (2025) *Closing the funding gap to end violence against women and girls*

[20] UNWomen (2025) *USD 420 billion annual shortfall blocking gender equality in developing countries*

[21] UNWOMEN (2025) *Closing the funding gap to end violence against women and girls*

[22] UNWOMEN (2026) *Beyond the breaking point*

[23] These examples draw on The Equality Institute and UNWOMEN (2023) *Together for Prevention: Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls*