

[E/CN.6/2010/CRP.4]. The Group had considered 45 confidential communications received by DAW, of which 21 had been replied to by Governments. No non-confidential communications were received. The Group observed that the communications most frequently concerned sexual violence, including rape, gang rape, forced prostitution, and incitement to sexual violence through gender stereotyping and the promotion of rape in new media, and failure by States to prevent such violations, provide protection and support for victims, and punish the perpetrators; other forms of violence, including domestic violence (especially domestic violence committed with firearms), trafficking, forced and early marriage and harmful traditional practices, with a lack of due diligence by States to investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators; abuse of power by military and law enforcement personnel, humiliation and lack of due process; physical and psychological threats and pressure on victims of violence, their families and witnesses by private individuals and law enforcement officials to prevent them from filing complaints, or to force retraction of complaints; inhumane treatment in detention and inadequate conditions of imprisonment for women, and failure by States to address such situations; serious and systematic violations of the human rights of women and girls, including rape, torture, killings and so-called “honour” crimes, as well as failure by States to prevent such violations, prosecute and punish perpetrators, and provide protection and support for victims and their families; harassment and death threats against female human rights defenders, and disproportionate penalties and restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression of female human rights defenders and of the press when reporting on women’s rights violations, by State and non-State actors as a means of pressuring them to stop their work, as well as failure by States to prevent such violations, provide protection to victims, and prosecute and punish the perpetrators; violations of the right to health, including sexual and reproductive health, of women, especially indigenous, low-income and marginalized women; and legislation and practices that discriminated against women in the areas of civil and political rights, especially the right to privacy, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and participation in decision-making processes and in public life on an equal basis with men.

During its consideration of communications, the Working Group expressed concern about violence against women and girls and mistreatment of woman human rights defenders; forced and early marriage and harmful traditional practices; the climate of impunity and abuse of power, including where violence against women was perpetrated or condoned by law enforcement personnel; the failure of States to exercise due diligence; and violations of the right of women to health, including sexual and reproductive health.

The Working Group was encouraged that some Governments had investigated the allegations and taken steps in response, including by enacting new legislation, introducing policies to better protect and assist women and victims of violence, developing national plans of action, introducing training modules to sensitize government officials to women’s issues, and improving public awareness to promote gender equality and the advancement of women.

UN-Women

In July, the General Assembly established the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (to be known as UN-Women) (**resolution 64/289**) (see p. 1396). The new entity, to become fully operational on 1 January 2011, would combine the mandates and assets of the four existing gender equality entities—OSAGI, DAW, UNIFEM and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). On 14 September, the Secretary General appointed Michelle Bachelet (Chile) as the head of UN-Women.

Report of Secretary-General. In response to resolution 63/311 [YUN 2009, p. 1368], the Secretary-General submitted a January report [A/64/588] in which he presented a comprehensive proposal for a composite entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Included in the report was the mission statement for the new entity, an organizational chart, and provisions related to the funding and establishment of an Executive Board to oversee operations. The report proposed that the composite entity be a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, to which it would report through the Economic and Social Council. The Commission on the Status of Women would play a crucial role in guiding the entity’s work. Combining the mandates and assets of the four existing gender equality entities—namely, OSAGI, DAW, UNIFEM, and INSTRAW—the composite entity would be the centre of the gender equality architecture of the UN system. To ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities and support for a more coherent, scaled-up response, work would be conducted through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination at the global level, the regional directors’ teams and the Regional Coordination Mechanism at the regional level, and the resident coordinator system at the country level.

The composite entity would have eight functions: provide support to UN bodies (the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council) in which commitments, norms and policy recommendations on gender equality and gender mainstreaming were discussed and agreed upon; support national efforts to promote and enhance gender equality and