



Together for girls

Ending violence against children

Considerations for Developing
Comprehensive National Actions to
Prevent and Respond to
Violence Against Children

JUNE 2015

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|--|---------|
| The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | CDC |
| Gender-Based Violence | GBV |
| Joint United National Programme on HIV/AIDS | UNAIDS |
| Monitoring and Evaluation | M&E |
| Multi Sector Task Force/Steering Committee | MSTF/SC |
| Pan American Health Organization | PAHO |
| President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief | PEPFAR |
| Technical Working Group | TWG |
| Terms of Reference | TOR |
| Together for Girls | TfG |
| United Nations Children's Fund | UNICEF |
| United Nations Population Fund | UNFPA |
| United States Agency for International Development | USAID |
| Violence Against Children | VAC |
| Violence Against Children Survey | VACS |
| Violence Against Women and Girls | VAWG |
| World Health Organization | WHO |

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Introduction

Together for Girls is a global public-private partnership dedicated to ending violence against children, with a particular focus on sexual violence against girls. Based on a pioneering model piloted in Swaziland, the partnership was launched in 2009 at the Clinton Global Initiative. The partnership includes five UN agencies (UNICEF, UNAIDS, UN Women, WHO and UNFPA), the U.S. government (the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Violence Prevention [CDC/DVP], the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief [PEPFAR], the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Department of State's Office of Global Women's Issues), the Government of Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, and the private sector (Grupo ABC, BD [Becton, Dickinson and Company], CDC Foundation and the Nduna Foundation).

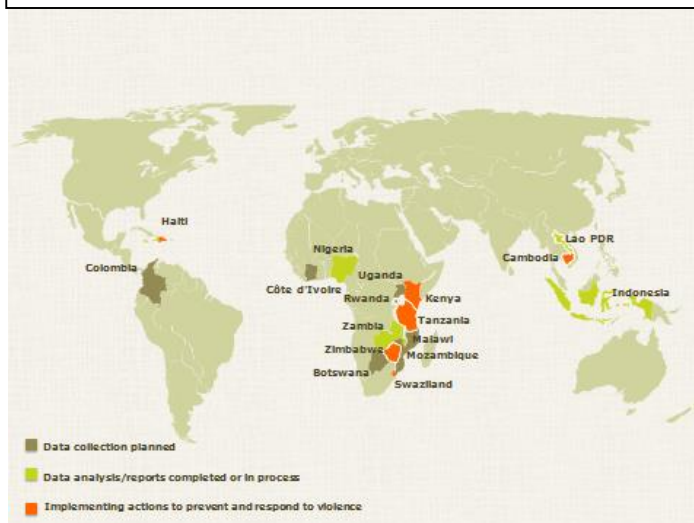
Together for Girls has three pillars of work:

- 1) Supporting national surveys on the magnitude, nature and impact of violence against children,
- 2) Supporting coordinated program actions in response to the problem of violence against children, and
- 3) Leading global advocacy and public awareness efforts to draw attention to the problem and promote evidence-based solutions.

At the national level, governments are in the lead of the partnership. The VACS is implemented under the leadership of country governments with participation from in-country partners (See Figure 1 for map of partner countries). The surveys determine the prevalence, incidence and circumstances surrounding emotional, physical and sexual violence against boys and girls prior to age 18, as well as risk and protective factors, service use and consequences of violence. (See Annex 1 for definitions of sexual, physical and emotional violence against children).

Countries enter the VACS process with strong national expressions of support for moving from the survey to action in response to the findings. Results are used to catalyze action and inform the development and implementation of the country-led multi-sector policy and programmatic response to VAC. These multi-sectoral actions are articulated through national

Figure 1: Map of Together for Girls partner countries



As of end-2014, VACS have been completed in Cambodia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Lao PDR, Malawi, Nigeria, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe; and Botswana, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Mozambique and Uganda are in various stages of planning for and implementing the survey. *(Note that Indonesia will not release a VACS report, but will lead a response to VAC based on all available data on VAC in the country.)*

action plans, processes and strategies, for which this document provides guidance.

In 2013, the partnership developed a process paper to provide guidance to countries beginning the VACS process, "[The Together for Girls Partnership: Linking Violence Against Children Surveys to Coordinated and Effective Action](#)." This document is intended to build on that paper, consolidating lessons learned from countries undertaking the *national action planning process* and providing issues to consider and key content areas to include as countries undertake the critical process of converting the data from the VACS survey into a coordinated, national, multi-sector response to violence against children.

Drawing on the experience and lessons learned to date from different countries, this document is not intended as a rigid template or precise guidance. Rather, it offers a description of the principles and key elements a national, multi-sector approach should contain and the parameters for ensuring an inclusive and well-coordinated process. We believe it will be helpful as Together for Girls partner countries move from VACS to action, transitioning from research to the development and implementation of national prevention and response activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michele Moloney-Kitts".

Michele Moloney-Kitts

Background: The United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children

The 2006 United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children¹ (the '[UN Study on Violence against Children](#)'), is the first global attempt to describe the scale of all forms of violence against girls and boys and its impact in the multiple settings where children live—including the home and family, in schools, care and justice systems, the workplace and the community. It approached the issue of violence from the combined perspectives of human rights, public health and child protection. The UN Study on Violence against Children also maps out what has been done to address violence against children and concludes with 12 overarching recommendations, primarily directed to States but also other sectors of society. The recommendations address improving efforts to prevent and address violence against children, and respond to it if it occurs. The key message of the Study is that no violence against children is justifiable, and all violence is preventable.

The Study emphasizes the urgency of country-level action to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against children. A key recommendation of the Study is that States develop a multifaceted and systematic framework to respond to violence against children, which is integrated into national planning processes. Such a national strategy, policy or plan of action should have realistic and time-bound targets and be coordinated by an agency with capacity to involve multiple sectors in a broad-based implementation strategy. Moreover, the implementation of the national strategy, policy or plan should be systematically evaluated according to established targets and timetables, and provided with adequate human and financial resources to support its implementation.

See Table 1 for the recommendations of the UN Study on Violence against Children; see Annex 2 for full text of recommendations.

Table 1: Summary of UN STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS for VAC NATIONAL ACTIONS
(For full recommendations, see Annex 2)

Recommendation 1: Strengthen national and local commitment and action

A national strategy, policy or plan of action on violence against children, with realistic and time-bound targets, coordinated by an agency with the capacity to involve multiple sectors in a broad-based implementation strategy, should be formulated.

Recommendation 2: Prohibit all forms of violence against children

Prohibit all forms of violence against children, in all settings, including all corporal punishment, harmful traditional practices, such as early and forced marriages, female genital mutilation and so-called honor crimes, sexual violence, and torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as required by international treaties.

Recommendation 3: Prioritize prevention

States should prioritize preventing violence against children by addressing its underlying causes. Just as resources devoted to intervening after violence has occurred are essential, States should allocate adequate resources to address risk factors and prevent violence before it occurs.

¹ A/61/299, Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children, 29 August 2006, which is accompanied by the [World Report on Violence against Children](#)

**Table 1: Summary of UN STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS for VAC NATIONAL ACTIONS,
continued**

(For full recommendations, see Annex 2)

Recommendation 4: Promote non-violent values and awareness-raising

States and civil society should strive to transform attitudes that condone or normalize violence against children, including stereotypical gender roles and discrimination, acceptance of corporal punishment, and other harmful traditional practices. States should ensure that children's rights are disseminated and understood, including by children.

Recommendation 5: Enhance the capacity of all who work with and for children

Initial and in-service training that imparts knowledge and respect for children's rights should be provided. States should invest in systematic education and training programmes both for professionals and non-professionals who work with or for children and families to prevent, detect and respond to violence against children.

Recommendation 6: Provide recovery and social reintegration services

States should provide accessible, child-sensitive and universal health and social services.

Recommendation 7: Ensure participation of children

States actively engage with children and respect their views in all aspects of prevention, response and monitoring of violence against them.

Recommendation 8: Create accessible and child friendly reporting systems and services

States should establish safe, well-publicized, confidential and accessible mechanisms for children, their representatives and others to report violence against children.

Recommendation 9: Ensure accountability and end impunity

States should build community confidence in the justice system by bringing all perpetrators of violence against children to justice and ensure that they are held accountable through appropriate criminal, civil, administrative and professional proceedings and sanctions.

Recommendation 10: Address the gender dimension of violence against children

States ensure that anti-violence policies and programmes are designed and implemented from a gender perspective, taking into account the different risks facing girls and boys in respect of violence. States should promote and protect the human rights of women and girls, and address all forms of gender discrimination as part of a comprehensive violence prevention strategy.

Recommendation 11: Develop and implement systematic national data collection and research

It is recommended that States improve data collection and information systems in order to identify vulnerable subgroups, inform policy and programming at all levels, and track progress towards the goal of preventing violence against children. States should use national indicators based on internationally agreed standards, and ensure that data are compiled, analysed and disseminated to monitor progress over time.

Recommendation 12: Strengthen international commitment

It is recommended that all States ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

The UN Study on Violence Against Children includes certain *principles for national action planning processes*:

- All violence against children is preventable. States must invest in evidence-based policies and programmes to address factors that give rise to violence against children.
- States have the primary responsibility to uphold children’s rights to protection and access to services, and to support families’ capacity to provide children with care in a safe environment.
- States have the obligation to ensure accountability in every case of violence.
- The vulnerability of children to violence is linked to their age and evolving capacity. Some children, because of gender, race, ethnic origin, disability or social status, are particularly vulnerable.
- Children have the right to express their views, and to have these views taken into account in the implementation of policies and programmes.

Core Elements of National Action Plans or Processes

Foundational principles of an action plan or strategy

There is no one way to plan national responses to violence against children nor is there a set template of what a national action plan should look like. The following sections, based on the experience of Together for Girls partner countries and guidance on coordinated national actions, provide some steps to “best practices” for countries completing a VACS and moving to the national action phase.

While plans will vary widely from country to country, in addition to the principles from the UN Study on VAC, the following foundational principles and considerations are important for the plan²:

- *Violence against children is multidimensional* and cannot be dealt with as a single cause and effect relationship. Violence against children demands an *integrated and holistic approach* and all programmes and actions should operate across a range of disciplines and sectors.
- Prevention of and response to violence requires *cross-sectoral co-operation and co-ordination* across central government departments, provinces and regions, and between government and civil society.
- *A multi-stakeholder approach is indispensable* for the eradication of violence against children as it is a responsibility that extends beyond state-controlled bodies and services to include all members of society.
- It is vital to *ground national actions in research and data* on the problem. The findings of the VACS and the problems, risks and protective factors identified will shape the prioritized national actions. Other data on VAC, both quantitative and qualitative, will also inform national actions, and may guide targeting interventions to particular populations, risks, geographic areas, etc.

² All but the final element of the principles and considerations adapted from Council of Europe ‘Policy Guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence’, 2009.

- The process should be *participatory*, with stakeholder and community involvement in planning; in particular, children and young people should have substantive consultation and leadership roles.
- It is *critical to scale up prevention* in order to ensure long-term protection from violence, by addressing the underlying causes and contributing factors. When building comprehensive actions, in each sector and/or area of intervention it is important to incorporate both violence prevention and services for those who have experienced violence. This includes integrating and supporting comprehensive, high-quality response services into the police and justice sector as well as the health sector and social services.
- It is important that countries *explicitly take into account the role that gender inequality plays* in driving violence against children. In most countries where data is available, girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, and boys and girls experience different risks and barriers to accessing support. A growing body of research indicates that experiencing violence as a child increases the risk of women experiencing gender-based violence, or men perpetrating violence, later in life.³ Different, complementary actions may be needed to work with girls and boys on empowerment and prevention. It is recommended that national actions integrate strategies for gender equality, and that VAC and VAWG strategies be aligned.

Key parameters:

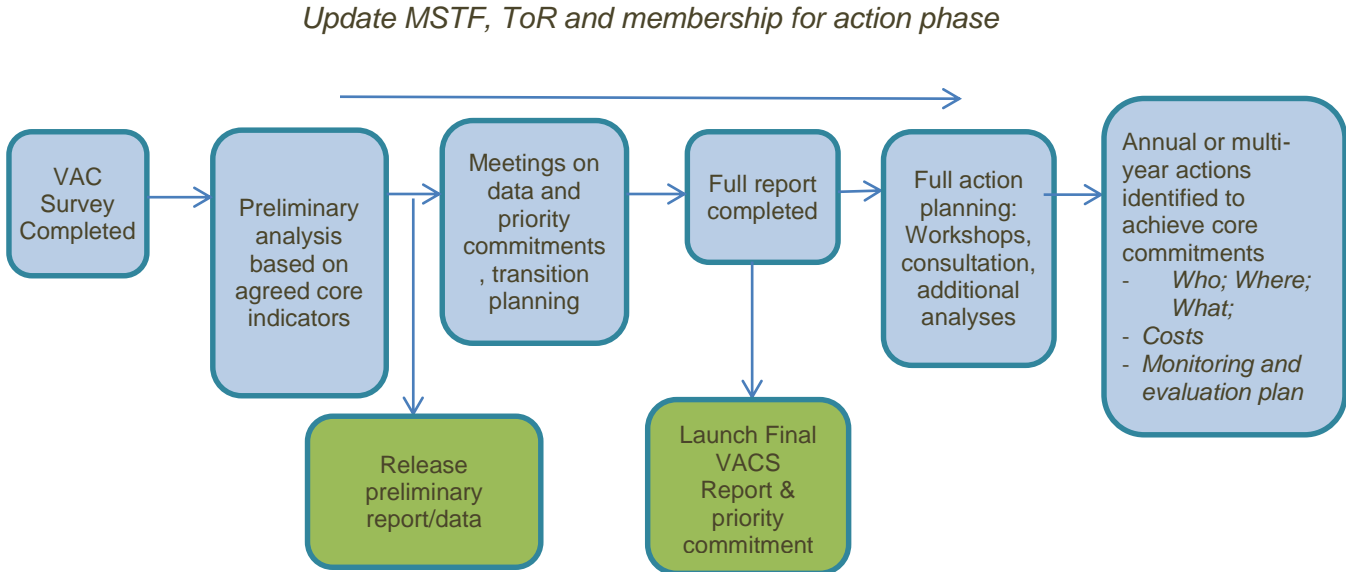
In line with the UN Study on VAC, national action plans, strategies and protocols will be coordinated by a ministry with the capacity to involve multiple sectors in a broad-based implementation strategy. For countries that have undertaken a VACS, the established Multi-Sector Task Force/Steering Committee (MSTF/SC) has taken on this role, with a lead ministry or higher level of government as primary focal point. Task Force focal points generally manage and oversee the research for their sectors, engaging other ministry staff members or organizations for needed information, with support and technical assistance from TfG partners.

Existing action plans provide some useful models to build from (a sample outline for a possible format is provided in Annex 6). Different countries' experiences have highlighted a few general parameters for developing a national action or response plan.

- Ensure the stakeholders for the plan are kept in mind throughout the planning process: Who are the beneficiaries? What groups are the targets for activities? What agencies/organizations will be responsible?
- The plan needs to be:
 - *Child-centered*: Children's rights and needs are the primary focus. This includes meaningful participation of children, adolescents and young adults in design, leadership and evaluation.
 - *Integrated and multidisciplinary*: Multi-sectoral, with programmes and policies integrated into pre-existing activities where possible and coordinated across sectors.
 - *Time-bound*: Goals include timeframe for activities to take place and target dates for milestones and completion.

- *Practical and Achievable*: Activities and goals of the plan must be realistic and attainable.
 - *Costed*: Clear budget lines related to each action, integrated into the budgets of responsible ministries from the national to the local level. Budget indicators and tracking can then be included in monitoring and evaluation.
- Building national capacity, including but not limited to training of professionals, is integral to the process to ensure national ownership and sustainability. Individual capacity-building activities will have more impact through long-term support (e.g. mentorship, supervisory visits, accountability measures, etc.) to ensure changes are sustainable.

Figure 2: Data to Action Flowchart for Countries Completing a VACS



Preparation/Administration for a ‘National Action Plan’

Designing and developing a National Action Plan or Strategy is grounded in a *participatory process*, which brings together a wide range of constituencies and stakeholders responsible for protecting children from all forms of violence (see Table 2 for an example list of participants).

Strengthen multi-sector task force or steering committee

As part of the process of initiating the development of the action plan, *review the terms of reference (TOR) for the MSTF/SC as well as the membership* and adjust it to reflect the evolving needs as the country moves from research to action. This includes accountability for the development and oversight of implementation of actions in prevention and response to violence against children.

Table 2: Illustrative Core Participants in the Multi-Sectoral Task Force

National level government participants, including:

- Community Development, Gender and Children
- Social Welfare
- Health
- Justice
- Police Force
- Education
- Labour
- Travel, Tourism
- Finance

Local Government

Civil Society, including:

- Community based organizations, including faith-based groups
- National NGOs
- The private sector Country offices of TfG partners

As the MSTF/SC transitions from oversight of the VACS to creating and implementing a response plan, it has generally been necessary to expand membership. A wide range of government ministries and departments will be involved as multi-sectoral work is developed. In addition to government partners, this is an opportunity to engage stakeholders who may become more involved as the country moves from research to programming and policy, such as new civil society actors, the private sector, and international development partners who were less involved in the research phase. Together for Girls partners can support the lead ministry in its capacity to engage and coordinate multiple sectors for the plan’s long-term success.⁴

The shift from research into policy and programme development may require technical assistance and support for the coordination function, along with funding for programme implementation. TfG partners may offer some of this support and can also advocate for support and partnering with other bi-lateral and multi-lateral partners and donors and the private sector. Encouraging new partners to join the MSTF/SC to expand the scope of programmes and monitoring capacity, in support of the national plan, may be beneficial.

An illustrative ToR for the MSTF/SC can be seen in Annex 3.

⁴ This capacity supporting role may be provided by one of the Together for Girls partners.

Action Plan Development; Terms of Reference

A clear *TOR for the action plan* is also needed to outline the process, assign key responsibilities and roles, and define expected outcomes and timelines.

Guided by the lead ministry, the MSTF/SC will want to *agree on a timeline for developing the action plan*. Timetables vary depending on many factors, such as the complexity of the proposed plan and the capacity of the government and partners, but should provide a benchmark to monitor progress and keep the process on track. In addition, it is useful to agree on a launch and dissemination strategy and public access to the final document at the end of the process, either as part of the TOR or separately.

An illustrative timeline can be seen in Annex 4.

- The process of developing a national plan, or integrating required actions into other existing strategies, may require significant time and labor input. Technical, logistical and administrative support is required to ensure the success and sustainability of rolling out the national actions. An important step is to review timeframes and planning processes for national strategies, related action plans, budgeting processes, etc. This may inform the planning for national actions.

Experience from countries developing multi-sectoral responses has shown that it may be *important to invest in technical assistance and coordination*. If it is determined that *technical assistance or a coordination unit/secretariat* is needed to support coordination of the partners and sectors, Together for Girls partners could be asked for support to work very closely with the lead ministry. In some countries, a Together for Girls partner has funded support in the lead ministry; in some a partner (often UNICEF) has taken on support including staff to support coordination. The best way to structure and invest in coordination will be determined by each country, depending on available capacity within government and among the partners. In some countries, capacity may be available or could be supported to be developed at the state level.

Preliminary data and Final VACS Report

Given the quantity and level of detail of VAC data, *undertaking preliminary analysis of the data* soon after data collection is important, and can help to *identify priority responses across the sectors*.

The majority of countries have launched a preliminary report on the key findings from the survey while comprehensive analysis of all indicators for the full report is undertaken. Preliminary analysis of “core indicators”—indicators that are important to give an idea of the scope of violence against children and are feasible to analyze early on in the data cleaning and analysis process—provides access to some of the key indicators early in the process while the full VACS report is being finalized and response actions are being planned. Preliminary data provides a platform for initial priority response planning.

This can be done through consultations among the MSTF/SC, and supported by the technical assistance from TfG partners. Once the priorities have been agreed across the sectors, detailed activities can be developed.

Finalizing the VACS report can be a lengthy process given the quantity of data and the number of analyses. Typically, this involves considerable engagement of the lead researchers on the ground along with CDC, UNICEF and key members of the MSTF. The challenge is making the best possible use of the VACS' extensive data. Given the scope and level of detail of the findings, it is typically necessary to look at it and review it in many different ways: what are the highest prevalence rates? Where is sexual, physical and emotional violence against girls and boys taking place most often? Is there anything specific to a certain population that can be reached? Who are the perpetrators? What are the risk factors? What service gaps are identified? In some cases, the data reveals information that is contrary to popular or previously held beliefs. In Swaziland, for example, teachers had been thought to be the main perpetrators of violence, but the survey results indicated that was not the case. These are critical discussions for consultations with stakeholders and ministries. Completing the report can be undertaken while consultations with key ministries on the findings etc. are also underway.

Grounding the national actions in a thorough situation analysis as well as being sure that the foundations for action build on all the available and relevant research can also be valuable. Background and contextual research can be initiated while the VACS report is being finalized, including:

- Review of available quantitative and qualitative data on violence to complement the VACS. This includes nationally-representative data as well as data that targets vulnerable populations, sub-regional surveys looking at geographic variation,
 - Inclusion of data on violence against women and girls (VAWG) also plays a critical role in designing responses that capture the relationship of VAC and VAWG at the national and local levels.
 - When there are vulnerable areas or groups that cannot be captured by the VACS, or when additional information is needed to understand an issue revealed by the VACS, it will be necessary to undertake different types of gap analysis, or refer to related surveys (HIV, school enrollment and completion, etc.), to identify issues that may be specific to a location or particular context
- Systems and services mapping
 - Assess current resources, capacities and gaps; what is working well (based on evidence) and what does *not* work (e.g. programs, laws or infrastructure that may need to be rethought, restructured or removed) and where are the gaps
- Institutional level analysis: Gaining a better understanding of what providers and implementers think, perceive and do in service provision, and why, will provide vital information to guide response planning. This can also include capacity assessments of facilities (health, justice, police, social service spaces, etc.).
- Participatory research: Getting input from children and communities on their priorities
 - This may include assessing what community-based/organic child protection structures and systems are already present, their strengths and weaknesses, and how they could be integrated into the national response.⁵

⁵ This type of assessment can help assure that responses are integrated with pre-existing structures, and could be a step towards community ownership and sustainability of prevention and response to violence.

Priority Responses and Transition Planning

Priority/Core Commitments: Examples from Tanzania and Cambodia

Cambodia:

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport: Promote the use of non-violent teaching and learning methods among education staff to eliminate and prevent physical punishment in schools.
- Ministry of Health: Develop guidelines for health clinics and effectively train health professionals on how to respond to violence against children, including identification of child survivors, care, reporting and referral of cases of violence against children to the appropriate social services.
- Ministry of Tourism: Establish 'community watch' systems against trafficking of women and children and train sub-national authorities on their roles in community monitoring.

Tanzania:

- Police: Ensure child victims of violence receive timely justice in a sensitive manner that avoids their revictimization
- Ministry of Health and Social Welfare: Ensure that all children exposed to all forms of sexual violence and abuse will receive emergency care and free treatment including Post-Exposure Prophylaxis and emergency contraception for adolescent girls.

Developing comprehensive actions to prevent and respond to violence against children can be a complex process. It may not be possible to develop a comprehensive response to the data by the launch of the VACS Final Report. Identifying, and publicly launching, priority commitments from government ministries is a strong initial step and can serve as the foundation of a long-term comprehensive strategy for action. Some countries have taken this multi-step approach:

- **Tanzania** developed initial priorities and publicized them to provide a quick public response to the data, while the next several months were devoted to developing a more extensive and detailed one-year plan.
- **Cambodia** launched [core commitments](#) with their VACS report, along with a summary report and complementary qualitative research. Long-term action planning is ongoing, with priority commitments as a jumping off point.

Other countries have chosen different approaches to launch responses:

- **Kenya** produced a "Summary Findings and Response Plan" sometime after the Survey was released, while **Swaziland** issued its recommended actions as part of the Survey document.

Tanzania's success in launching its initial high level "Priority Responses" along with the VACS results suggests that *early discussions around a robust, multi-faceted response to preliminary analysis of VAC data* can play a pivotal role. Active consultation with the task

force focal points and their respective sectors led to the development of the initial high level “Priority Responses.” Focal points knew the relevant laws, policy frameworks, practices and programmes that were in place, or needed to be put in place to address the survey findings. From the initial Priority Responses, specific violence prevention and response activities were later developed as part of the comprehensive National Action Plan. The one-year plan allowed Tanzania to begin comprehensive responses while developing its longer-term, three-year strategy. Tanzania’s experience demonstrates the importance of creating momentum early to lead into long-term actions, as well as the importance that a transitional plan (such as the 1-year plan Tanzania released first) can play in ensuring actions take place while undertaking longer-term planning.

Convening Meetings and Workshops

Some countries held preliminary workshops to gather a broad group with the MSTF/SC to flesh out the priorities and then a second workshop to finalize the plan. Tanzania, for example, held an initial three-day workshop (supported by UNICEF), which gathered together the task force focal points and other staff invited from their respective ministries. Civil society representatives also participated. Ideally these initial workshops should include a review of the ‘state of the art’ in violence prevention, ensuring that the best science and evidence available are referenced for programming.

After the first workshop, task force focal points took the lead, supported by UNICEF, in engaging in extensive consultations and networking in the following months to develop their detailed activities, indicators and budgets. The second workshop was held several months later to finalize the three-year plan before its official launch by the Minister. One of the keys to the success of Tanzania’s workshops was including the planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME) staff from each sector, to support the technical focal points. Ministry PME staff played a key role in aligning the proposed activities and interventions with existing national strategies.

From the start of transitional planning, discussions should include outreach to national/local civil society organizations as well as district and local-level leadership to begin the long-term process of local ownership and buy-in to the problem of violence against children and solutions.

Moving to long-term action plans

Developing the Action Plan

Illustrative Outline of an Action Plan or Strategy

- Analysis/summary of the existing evidence, including findings from the VACS
- National context and framework: all national laws and policies relevant to children's well-being (social policy, health care policy, educational policy, gender policy, etc.) and existing laws, policies, and programmes for child welfare and protection, including laws and policies that particularly impact girls
- Vision and mission of the national plan
- Sectoral priorities, detailing:
 - Key actions (both overall goals and key actions to achieve them)
 - Actors/institutions (who is responsible?)
 - Population targets
- Timeframe: Milestones for conducting key actions and interventions, annual budget, and monitoring and evaluation
- Budget/activity costs for each activity based on the timeline (annual, biannual etc.). Budget amounts should be connected to the budgets of the responsible ministry.
- Institutional arrangements to manage and oversee the plan to ensure accountability
- Detailed monitoring and evaluation framework with indicators, targets and timelines for measurement and reporting

Developing a multi-year action plan includes identifying specific activities to accomplish each goal, clear timeframe, costing of activities, realistic targets, and an M&E plan. There are many ways of beginning the development of a long-term plan; one way is to ask a series of guiding questions in each sector on how existing services and programmes relate to the issues identified in the survey.

See Annex 5 for sample guiding questions.

Developing an integrated approach

Whenever possible, the Together for Girls model *builds on existing programmes and activities and integrates violence prevention and response into pre-existing platforms*. This includes, for example, ensuring that violence response is integrated with HIV testing, treatment and care services where possible, and where not possible or appropriate, strong referral linkages are developed and maintained. It is always recommended to align with and integrate work into pre-existing, related coordinating bodies, strategies and national action plans for related sectors and thematic areas, including children, health, education, and violence against women and girls. The elaboration of an action plan requires sustained engagement, consultations and advocacy within and outside the government, and focusing on the developing a broad multi-sectoral approach, incorporating the many sectors that can play a role in violence prevention and response.

It is also important to ensure that the plan is as inclusive as possible, paying particular attention to the protection of vulnerable groups, even if they were not explicitly captured under the VACS, such as children with disabilities, children working and/or living on the street, etc.

The best approach to national actions will vary depending on the country. The varied approaches taken to date have highlighted the many differing approaches countries take to respond to the data and design and roll out national actions:

- **Swaziland**, the first country to undertake a survey, adopted a comprehensive policy approach integrated into other ongoing national efforts and strategies, including recommendations in the survey report to integrate efforts to address violence against children into existing infrastructure for HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. It also used data to push for new legislation.
- **Zimbabwe** first adopted an integrated approach, introducing a series of guidelines. "[The Protocol on Multi-Sectoral Management of Violence and Sexual Abuse in Zimbabwe](#)" updates an earlier protocol building on VACS findings, with the goals of safeguarding the rights of survivors of sexual violence and abuse. It provides a standard set of age and gender-sensitive procedures, and clarifies roles and responsibilities of service providers. Then, recognizing the high rates of sexual violence against girls identified in the research, in 2014, Zimbabwe produced and launched the more **stand-alone** response document, "[Girls' and Young Women's Empowerment Framework](#)" with multi-sectoral goals related to girls' empowerment and self-efficacy along five categories. The framework includes responsibilities and indicators across ministries responsible for the goals.
- **Kenya** developed a **stand-alone** response plan using a thematic approach, focusing on four areas: legislative and policy issues; quality and availability of services; coordination of the child protection sector; and circumstances in which violence occurs.
- **Tanzania** developed a **stand-alone** plan, rolling out the initial multi-sector "Priority Responses Towards a Multi-Sectoral National Prevention and Response Plan (2011-2015)" and then building from there to a "costed one-year transitional plan ("From Commitments to Action: Key Achievements from the Multi-Sectoral "Priority Responses to Address Violence Against Children (2011-2012) and Priority Activities for 2012-2013") and then a final three-year "[National Plan of Action to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Children](#)" with an M&E framework.

As noted earlier, it is important to *reference the best science and evidence available* in developing programmatic responses to the data. For instance, if a parenting programme is going to be initiated, the initiative should be based on the best existing evidence.⁶

Addressing capacity issues, and building capacity at different levels and across all sectors (for example, through training of social workers, police, lawyers, local community health workers, and other key staff across sectors) is essential for successful

⁶ See for example WHO paper on "Preventing Violence: evaluating outcomes of parenting programs", 2013 http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/violence/parenting_evaluations/en/ or "Preventing Child Maltreatment: A Guide to Taking Action and Generating Evidence", 2006. http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2006/9241594365_eng.pdf?ua=1

implementation and long-term sustainability. This should include direct youth engagement, and training government and civil society actors at community, regional, and national levels.

There are many other tools and checklists to reference as guidance for developing action plans.⁷

Integrate plans for scale up

When developing an action plan, ideally scale up of key interventions and actions will be built into all plans. This will also help develop long-term budgeting strategies for the actions.

It may not be possible to roll out new prevention and response activities nationwide. Many countries have designated “pilot” districts where certain new strategies or interventions are rolled out and tested. Plans for scale-up can be integrated in a variety of ways:

- To test out new interventions that require evidence that it works in the country context and data on how to tailor the programme for scale-up, interventions may initially be planned in pilot sites. Many evidence-based interventions will have not been tested in similar contexts, and it may be important that pilots:
 - Include formative research on how they might fit this context;
 - Be tailored to the context/population;
 - Include a strong monitoring and evaluation component to ensure their effectiveness in new settings. Partners should be the first source for providing the most recent research.
- Certain interventions may be an important part of building capacity and infrastructure for a sector, but not be possible to scale up at the start of the action plan, and require long-term planning. For example, Tanzania set a three-year goal to have child protection systems in 30 districts by 2016. The plan built in scale-up over three years, starting with 10 Local Government Authorities in Year 1, building to 20 in Year 2 and 30 in Year 3. The plan sets indicator goals on local budgets and staff capacity, with activities across advocacy, technical support, document dissemination and monitoring. As of May 2014, about one year into the 3-year plan, 21 such systems were in various stages of development.

When planning for scale up, the MSTF/SC should take into account *the cost and sustainability of the programme*. Piloting programmes early on in select districts should include cost-effectiveness analyses to ensure that scale up will have valuable impact and be sustainable.

⁷ See for example WHO checklists for developing mental health plans; (http://www.who.int/mental_health/policy/essentialpackage1/en/). Another example is the UN Women Handbook on National Action Plans on VAW (<http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2012/7/HandbookNationalActionPlansOnVAW-en%20pdf.pdf>). The Council of Europe’s ‘Policy Guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence’, 2009, provides guidance on developing legal, policy and institutional frameworks on developing national strategies on protecting children from violence.

Other considerations

In the early stages of developing and rolling out an action plan, countries may also wish to consider questions such as:

- How should different levels (national, regional, district, community) interact? Does the plan include all of these levels?
- Is there a balance of violence prevention and response?
- Will actions benefit the most vulnerable populations?
- Communications: How will the results of the VACS be communicated to communities, the media and different sectors? In order to support the national action plan and get buy-in, what messages need to be shared? Does a communications strategy need to be developed to share results and support effective advocacy?

Management and implementation strategies

While there are varied ways to manage the process of developing and evaluating, ongoing consultations and regular meetings with the MSTF/SC and lead ministry has proven to be critical to ensure that implementation is moving forward. In addition the MSTF can provide support in problem solving to remove barriers to implementation and advocate for resources.

Dissemination

Disseminating the plan across relevant ministries and civil society groups, as well as meetings to create understanding and buy-in to the plan, will be important at the outset. It is also important that *information on the plan's implementation is widely disseminated to stakeholders, including communities*, to raise the public profile of the response. Increasing the visibility and positive results of actions taken to prevent and to address violence in many forums, including at national, regional and local levels, can help build investment and buy-in to action. The launch of the report, along with public commitment demonstrated by government and civil society leaders, can be an important time to promote awareness of both the problem and planned response, as well as build public ownership. This is also a good chance to give visibility to a variety of stakeholders. In Cambodia for example, the October 2014 launch provided a platform for speakers on violence and solutions from the government, faith community, academics, and youth advocates. Roll-out of key actions or other points of possible interest should also receive public attention through media and other channels to maintain momentum.

Management and Implementation

Each sector will be responsible for implementing their agreed activities with their respective partners and donors, collecting data, and reporting back to their line ministry and the MSTF/SC quarterly, using a standard format (see Annex 9 for example). Regular reports can be used to develop an annual progress report, providing an opportunity to address any gaps or constraints in implementing the commitments in the action plan. Reports can be reviewed and discussed at regular, MSTF/SC meetings (for example, quarterly) to oversee implementation, monitor progress, and maintain focus and momentum. Agreeing on the mechanism for monitoring progress at the outset can help ensure accountability and continued coordination.

Advocacy

Different countries' experience to date in developing national action plans, both successes and challenges, has underscored the crucial role of advocacy in building strong support for a national response to the VACS. If strategically used, the data from the survey can play a powerful role in communicating the problem of child violence and building the necessary political will and support. The surveys have typically revealed higher than previously recognized prevalence of violence against children, and given MSTF/SC members the evidence to advocate and influence the national response, and push for sustained consultations with the different ministries and constituencies.

Both internal advocacy (within ministries/organizations) and external advocacy (to higher levels of government, media, ministries not involved with the MSTF/SC, community, etc.) are required. Some country experiences have underscored the importance of "bureaucratic advocacy" working within the government at both a technical and political level with key departments to highlight the findings and propose actions to address the problem of violence. Sustained political engagement and advocacy can then result in high level support for the process.

External advocacy to create greater public awareness of the extent and depth of the problem is also critical to reducing violence against children. Actively engaging the media at the launch of the VACS and on an ongoing basis helps to gain the necessary political and public support for the national response. When engaging the media, it is important to consider the sensitivity of discussing and reporting on violence against children and violence against women. Developing advocacy and communications strategies, clear and consistent key messages to share with media, and developing shareable materials will all help. It may be useful to train journalists on sensitive issues related to VAC and gender-based violence, such as the legal and social context of different types of violence, appropriate language to use when reporting, myths around violence against children and gender-based violence, etc.

Fostering strong political support, including for financing on children's and gender programming, coordination, and monitoring, will be important at both national and local levels. Advocacy among donors may also be necessary to fund pilot programmes as well as long-term, multi-sectoral work. Having a clear sense of advocacy priorities with donors and development partners, both for discrete projects and multi-sectoral or longer-term programmes, and identifying who and how to advocate will help countries promote and secure funding for their national actions and strategies. While external funding will likely be necessary, it is important that long-term sustainability be built into plans.

In general, advocacy and education efforts, including through media campaigns, schools and public health outreach, and other efforts are vital to raise awareness and educate people about the seriousness of the issue, and the importance of initiating programmes and policies to address violence. Community interventions to prevent violence against children, involving all sectors and stakeholders, should be supported and pursued as widely and vigorously as possible.

Inter-country learning exercises such as exchange visits between countries just starting the VACS process and those who have entered the action phase are important to promote shared learning and south-south networks that will improve overall capacity of

countries. The 2012 visit from a high-level delegation from Cambodia to learn from Tanzania's experience conducting a VACS and designing a response is a good example of how countries can serve as mentors to each other.

Monitoring and evaluation of the plan/strategy

A solid monitoring and evaluation framework is essential to monitor progress against the targets established in the plan. It also helps to identify interventions which are successful and should be scaled up. Both routine monitoring and larger evaluations are essential to track progress and make adjustments.

The monitoring system should build capacity and integrate routine reporting at the community- and district-level based upon nationally established indicators. Given the critical role of the social services, health, education and justice sectors, all need to track and report. It is also useful to monitor budgets allocated to child protection and violence prevention and response. Swaziland took the approach of using a continuous surveillance system to gauge progress on an ongoing basis and make changes rapidly as indicated by the data.

Given the complexity of issues surrounding violence, survey research is also needed. This includes everything from qualitative work at the community-level to be sure that services address both real and perceived needs to household surveys to see progress on violence reduction over time. Given the fact that violence prevention and response is also an emerging field, implementation research to identify the most effective and cost efficient interventions is also needed.

More guidance on monitoring and evaluation for national action plans and programmes can be found in the [Handbook for National Action Plans for Violence Against Women](#); [Preventing Child Maltreatment: A Guide to Taking Action and Generating Evidence](#), and other sources.

ANNEX 1 – DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Child: This guidance refers to the definitions of a “child” as contained in Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) – ratified by 194 member states. A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.⁸

Violence against children: These guidelines refer to the definition of “violence” as contained in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Article 19 of the CRC protects children from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child. This definition covers the exposure of children to violence in the home and elsewhere.

Violence among children: This includes physical, psychological and sexual violence, often by bullying, exerted by children against other children, frequently by groups of children, which not only harms a child’s physical and psychological integrity and well-being in the immediate-term, but often has severe impact on his or her development, education and social integration in the medium- and long-term. Also, violence by youth gangs takes a severe toll on children, whether as victims or as participants. Although children are the actors, the role of adults responsible for these children is crucial in all attempts to appropriately react and prevent such violence, ensuring that measures do not exacerbate violence by taking a punitive approach and using violence against violence. (Source: *Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 13, The Right of the Child to Freedom from all forms of Violence, paragraph 2, 2011*)⁹

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence: The World Health Organization has developed the following definition of sexual violence, which is commonly used by the public health sector, and is not specific to children:

Sexual violence can be defined as any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work. (Krug EG et al., eds. *World report on violence and health. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002*).

Sexual exploitation and abuse of children: The Convention on the Rights of the Child protects children from all forms of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. According to article 34, State Parties undertake to take all appropriate measures to protect children

⁸ Source: Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 1, adopted 1989, entered into force 1990

⁹ Take from: UNICEF Child Protection (2012) Internationally Recognized Child Protection Terminology.

from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, including the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; the exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; and the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000) together with the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007) provide the following definitions of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation in prostitution and pornography, and the sale of children.

Child sexual abuse:

- 1) Engaging in sexual activities with a child who, according to the relevant provisions of national law, has not reached the legal age for sexual activities;
- 2) Engaging in sexual activities with a child where use is made of coercion, force or threats, or abuse is made of a recognized position of trust, authority or influence over the child, including within the family; or abuse is made of a particularly vulnerable situation of the child, notably because of a mental or physical disability or a situation of dependence. It should be noted that the provisions of paragraph a) are not intended to govern consensual sexual activities between children under the age of 18 years. *(Article 18 of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse)*

Child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation also include: child prostitution and child pornography, the participation of a child in pornographic performances (including recruiting, coercing and causing a child to participate in pornographic performances, or profiting from or otherwise exploiting a child for such purposes and knowingly attending performances involving the participation of children), intentional causing, for sexual purposes, a child who has not reached the legal age for sexual activities to witness sexual abuse or sexual activities, even without having to participate, and the solicitation of children for sexual purposes. *(Articles 18-23 of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse)*

Exploitation of children in prostitution: The use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration. *(Article 2 of the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography)*

Exploitation of children in pornography/child abuse materials: Any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes. *(Article 2 of the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography)*

Sale of children: Any act or transaction whereby a child is transferred by any person or group of persons to another for remuneration or any other consideration. *(Article 2 of the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography)*

Physical Violence: Includes fatal and non-fatal physical violence, including all corporal punishment and all other forms of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and physical bullying and hazing by adults and by other children.

Children with disabilities may be subject to particular forms of physical violence such as forced sterilisation, particularly girls; violence in the guise of treatment (for example electroconvulsive treatment [ECT] and electric shocks used as “aversion treatment” to control children’s behaviour); and deliberate infliction of disabilities on children for the purpose of exploiting them for begging in the streets or elsewhere. (*Source: CRC General Comment No. 13, pg. 9-10*)

Corporal punishment: Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting (“smacking”, “slapping”, “spanking”) children, with the hand or with an implement—a whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, caning, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion. Corporal punishment is invariably degrading. (*Source: Committee on the Rights of the Child, General comment No. 8: The Right of the Child to Protection from Corporal Punishment and Other Cruel or Degrading Forms of Punishment, paragraph 11, 2006.*)

Emotional Violence

Emotional Violence may also be described as psychological maltreatment, mental abuse, verbal abuse, mental violence or neglect and this can include:

- All forms of persistent harmful interactions with the child, for example, conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or only of value in meeting another’s needs;
- Scaring, terrorizing and threatening; exploiting and corrupting; spurning and rejecting; isolating, ignoring and favouritism;
- Denying emotional responsiveness; neglecting mental health, medical and educational needs;
 - Insults, name-calling, humiliation, belittling, ridiculing and hurting a child’s feelings;
 - Exposure to domestic violence;
 - Placement in solitary confinement, isolation or humiliating or degrading conditions of detention; and
 - Psychological bullying and hazing by adults or other children, including via information and communication technologies, such as mobile phones and the Internet (known as “cyber bullying”).

(*Source: Definition of mental violence from Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 13, The Right of the Child to Freedom from all forms of Violence, paragraph 21, 2011*)

ANNEX 2 – OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE UN STUDY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

1. Strengthen national and local commitment and action

96. I recommend that all States develop a multifaceted and systematic framework to respond to violence against children which is integrated into national planning processes. A national strategy, policy or plan of action on violence against children with realistic and time-bound targets, coordinated by an agency with the capacity to involve multiple sectors in a broad-based implementation strategy, should be formulated. National laws, policies, plans and programmes should fully comply with international human rights and current scientific knowledge. The implementation of the national strategy, policy or plan should be systematically evaluated according to established targets and timetables, and provided with adequate human and financial resources to support its implementation. However, any strategy, policy, plan or programme to address the issue of violence against children must be compatible with the conditions and resources of the country under consideration.

2. Prohibit all violence against children

97. I urge States to ensure that no person below 18 years of age is subjected to the death penalty or a sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of release. I recommend that States take all necessary measures to immediately suspend the execution of all death penalties imposed on persons for crimes committed before reaching the age of 18 and take the appropriate legal measures to convert them into penalties that are in conformity with international human rights standards. The death penalty as a sentence imposed on persons for crimes committed before reaching the age of 18 should be abolished as a matter of highest priority.

98. I urge States to prohibit all forms of violence against children, in all settings, including all corporal punishment, harmful traditional practices, such as early and forced marriages, female genital mutilation and so-called honour crimes, sexual violence, and torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as required by international treaties, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. I draw attention to general comment No. 8 (2006) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment (articles 19, 28, para. 2, and 37, *inter alia*) (CRC/C/GC/8).

3. Prioritize prevention

99. I recommend that States prioritize preventing violence against children by addressing its underlying causes. Just as resources devoted to intervening after violence has occurred are essential, States should allocate adequate resources to address risk factors and prevent violence before it occurs. Policies and programmes should address immediate risk factors, such as a lack of parent-child attachment, family breakdown, abuse of alcohol or drugs, and access to firearms. In line with the Millennium Development Goals, attention should be focused on economic and social policies that

address poverty, gender and other forms of inequality, income gaps, unemployment, urban overcrowding, and other factors which undermine society.

4. Promote non-violent values and awareness-raising

100. I recommend that States and civil society should strive to transform attitudes that condone or normalize violence against children, including stereotypical gender roles and discrimination, acceptance of corporal punishment and harmful traditional practices. States should ensure that children's rights are disseminated and understood, including by children. Public information campaigns should be used to sensitize the public about the harmful effects that violence has on children. States should encourage the media to promote non-violent values and implement guidelines to ensure full respect for the rights of the child in all media coverage.

5. Enhance the capacity of all who work with and for children

101. I recommend that the capacity of all those who work with and for children to contribute to eliminate all violence against them must be developed. Initial and in-service training which imparts knowledge and respect for children's rights should be provided. States should invest in systematic education and training programmes both for professionals and non-professionals who work with or for children and families to prevent, detect and respond to violence against children. Codes of conduct and clear standards of practice, incorporating the prohibition and rejection of all forms of violence, should be formulated and implemented.

6. Provide recovery and social reintegration services

102. I recommend that States should provide accessible, child-sensitive and universal health and social services, including pre-hospital and emergency care, legal assistance to children and, where appropriate, their families when violence is detected or disclosed. Health, criminal justice and social service systems should be designed to meet the special needs of children.

7. Ensure participation of children

103. I recommend that States actively engage with children and respect their views in all aspects of prevention, response and monitoring of violence against them, taking into account article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children's organizations and child-led initiatives to address violence guided by the best interests of the child should be supported and encouraged.

8. Create accessible and child-friendly reporting systems and services

104. I recommend that States should establish safe, well-publicized, confidential and accessible mechanisms for children, their representatives and others to report violence against children. All children, including those in care and justice institutions, should be aware of the existence of mechanisms of complaint. Mechanisms such as telephone helplines, through which children can report abuse, speak to a trained counsellor in confidence and ask for support and advice, should be established and the creation of other ways of reporting violence through new technologies should be considered.

9. Ensure accountability and end impunity

105. I recommend that States should build community confidence in the justice system by bringing all perpetrators of violence against children to justice and ensure that they are held accountable through appropriate criminal, civil, administrative and professional

proceedings and sanctions. Persons convicted of violent offences and sexual abuse of children should be prevented from working with children.

10. Address the gender dimension of violence against children

106. I recommend that States should ensure that anti-violence policies and programmes are designed and implemented from a gender perspective, taking into account the different risks facing girls and boys in respect of violence; States should promote and protect the human rights of women and girls and address all forms of gender discrimination as part of a comprehensive violence-prevention strategy.

11. Develop and implement systematic national data collection and research

107. I recommend that States improve data collection and information systems in order to identify vulnerable subgroups, inform policy and programming at all levels, and track progress towards the goal of preventing violence against children. States should use national indicators based on internationally agreed standards, and ensure that data are compiled, analysed and disseminated to monitor progress over time. Where not currently in place, birth, death and marriage data registries with full national coverage should be created and maintained. States should also create and maintain data on children without parental care and children in the criminal justice system. Data should be disaggregated by sex, age, urban/rural, household and family characteristics, education and ethnicity. States should also develop a national research agenda on violence against children across settings where violence occurs, including through interview studies with children and parents, with particular attention to vulnerable groups of girls and boys.

12. Strengthen international commitment

108. I recommend that all States ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. All reservations that are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention and the Optional Protocols should be withdrawn in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights of 1993. States should ratify all relevant international and regional human rights instruments that provide protection for children including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol; the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol; ILO Conventions No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour; and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. States should implement all their international legal obligations and strengthen their cooperation with the treaty bodies.

109. I recommend that States act in conformity with their commitments on the prevention of violence made at the special session of the General Assembly on children and in the context of the WHO Health Assembly resolution 74 on implementing the recommendations of the *World Report on Violence and Health*, and other regional public health resolutions that reinforce this resolution.

ANNEX 3 - SAMPLE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference For the Multi Sector Task Force on Violence Against Children

Introduction and background

The planning process for the Violence against Children Study started in _____. Subsequently, the Multi-Sector Task Force (MSTF) or Steering Committee was conceived in _____, including government, civil society, the UN and development partners, forming a joint and collective effort to not only guide the research study, its implementation, and the launch of the final report, but also to help steer the research into action and provide the platform of multi-stakeholder engagement to address the report's findings. The conceptualization of the MSTF/SC was initiated by the Ministry of _____ with the central aim of ensuring national ownership and oversight of the entire process, i.e. overseeing the VAC survey, analysis of the findings and moving from research towards a national response.

In _____, the Ministry of _____ launched the national Violence Against Children Study report, which highlights that sexual, physical and emotional violence against children is a serious public health, human rights and social problem in _____.
(Insert summary of key findings from VAC.)

Moving from research into action, the Multi-Sector Task Force (MSTF) agreed **Key Priority Responses** across a number of sectors: of _____. These **Priority Responses** form the basis of the **National Plan of Action to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Children**.

Overall Original Management Framework¹⁰:

Following an inter-agency and inter-sectoral meeting, it was agreed to establish a Multi-Sector Task Force for the Violence Against Children Survey (VACs), which would have the overarching responsibility for overseeing the VACS. To facilitate the effective delivery of the research, the Terms of Reference covered:

- 1) Policy guidance and coordination
- 2) Research design and delivery
- 3) Resource mobilization for the survey
- 4) Strategic partnerships, and
- 5) Communication

The frequency of meetings was on a monthly basis from the outset to oversee the survey process.

¹⁰ In other words, the original management framework at the time the actual survey was being carried out.

New Overall Management Framework:

Given the evolution of the VACS from a focus on research to a focus on programmatic response, the following is proposed as the new coordinating arrangements for the MSTF:

1. The Multi-Sector Task Force on Violence Against Children

1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Policy guidance and coordination (lead Ministry)

- Ministry to provide overall leadership in the implementation of the **National Plan**
- Chair the monthly/quarterly MSTF meetings in the Ministry conference room
- Ministry to ensure, in particular, effective collaboration and participation of other MDAs¹¹ in the monthly/quarterly meetings and implementation of the **National Plan**
- Advocate for the integration of VAC **Priority Responses** into sector MDA strategies, plans and programmes at national level where not already done and to integrate VAC into National Development Plans
- Prepare and widely distribute an Annual Report on the status of the implementation of the **National Plan**

The Ministry convenes and chairs the Multi-Sector Task Force (MSTF) with UNICEF (or another TfG partner) providing Secretariat support.

Secretariat support involves administration of the Task Force, namely:

- Planning meeting schedules and support writing official Government invitation letters to members in conjunction with the lead Ministry
- Agreeing meeting agendas with the Ministry and agreeing issues that need member discussion and approval
- Agreeing the *modus operandi* for engaging senior Government officials in the response process
- Organizing the receipt of MSTF comments and feedback on matters arising
- Providing technical support in the development and implementation of the *National Plan*, particularly in the consultation and writing phase and in the area of monitoring and reporting against results
- Participating in and taking minutes of meetings and matters arising for follow-up
- Maintaining a central filing system and database of members

Resource Mobilization and Partnership building (Chair and Secretariat)

- Assist in resource mobilization for funding shortfalls through dialogue with local and internationally-based development partners, foundations etc.

¹¹ MDAs is: Ministries, Departments and Agencies.

- Facilitate international cooperation around VAC, in particular through South-South cooperation.

Strategic partnership and participation (all members of the Task Force)

There are a series of expectations toward monitoring and reporting on implementation of the **National Plan**:

- 1) Individually, each sector is responsible for implementing their agreed activities, data collection, validation and reporting back to their line Ministry and the MSTF on a quarterly basis using a Standard Quarterly Progress Report format.
- 2) Based on the Quarterly Progress Reports from all sectors, a consolidated report will then be submitted to the MSTF chair, which will be discussed during the quarterly meeting and will contribute toward the development of an annual progress report (the Annual Report).

The progress report and the quarterly MSTF meetings provide an opportunity for members to flag any key constraints or gaps challenging their capacity to implement, monitor and report against their agreed commitments toward the **National Plan**.

Member Focal Points are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information submitted to the MSTF and must sign the Quarterly Progress Report.

At the end of every year (in line with the government's reporting cycle) a detailed report covering all **Priority Responses** and achievements towards indicators with an executive summary will be prepared by the MSTF Chair, with support from the Secretariat.

Moving from research to action and monitoring of the **National Plan**, the MSTF will have a standard agenda for discussion at each meeting, which will present progress updates as well as sharing of experiences on achievements, challenges and lessons learnt.

Participation of members will continue to be at a technical level with the understanding that all discussions and agreements during meetings are fed back to a senior level in each respective Ministry to ensure decision-making and sectoral ownership. Participation in meetings from a senior level will continue to be as and when requested by the Chair.

1.2 Structure and Composition

- Chaired by lead Ministry_____
- The membership includes representation from:

List the key government sectors and focal points names as appropriate in your country, i.e.:

- Social Welfare
- Health
- HIV/AIDS Commission/Ministry
- Justice
- The Police

- Local Government
- Education
- NGO Representative
- Religious Group Representative
- National Bureau of Statistics Representative

TfG represented by:

UNICEF
WHO
UNFPA
UN Women

Development Partners:

U.S. Government represented by.....

European Union represented by.....

- Additional members may be included through the agreement of the Task Force and based on their strategic importance to progress implementation of the National Plan

1.3 Meeting schedule

The frequency of standard meetings will be monthly/quarterly (depending on country circumstance), but other meetings can be scheduled as and when requested by the Chair or as needs arise

1.4 Quorum

For decision-making, at least half of the Multi Sector Task Force membership should take part in a meeting. Decisions will be based on a consultative process and will be documented by the designated secretary for the meeting.

ANNEX 4 – SAMPLE TIMELINE

- Early data analysis and prioritization of sector responses by the MSTF/SC.
- *Launch of VACS Report and Initial Priority Responses.* [Note that some countries may be in a position to launch the detailed action plan alongside the launch of the survey report]
- Developing the more detailed action plan: Preliminary planning for first workshop with the MSTF/SC; establishment of secretariat (if not already established during the survey process).
- *Two months after VACS launch:* Hold initial workshop with MSTF/SC, Task force focal points and other staff from the key ministries based on invitation letter from the coordinating Ministry (include Ministry planning and M&E staff) and civil society to flesh out the priority responses.
- Hold intensive consultations and meetings between the MSTF/SC focal points and staff within ministries and among civil society groups, and broader coordination meetings with partners; MSTF/SC oversees and coordinates by regularly reviewing and providing feedback on the proposed interventions, supported by any provided technical assistance/Secretariat.
- *Six months after VACS launch:* Hold second workshop to review input from focal points and develop final draft of the national plan which details a clear Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Results Framework.
- Engage in final technical review with MSTF/SC and political meetings to gain consensus on plan.
- *Eight months after VACS launch:* Launch Detailed Action Plan.

ANNEX 5 – GUIDING QUESTIONS

Moving from Identifying Priorities to National Action Planning [Sample Guiding Questions to Government Sectors]

- 1) Do/can current services/programmes adequately respond to the service gaps identified in the survey findings? What current services/programmes exist in your sector that could, if strengthened/improved, *prevent* and *respond* to violence against children?
- 2) As part of a child protection system, what is the specific role of (a) your Ministry and (b) the associated professionals (e.g. teachers, doctors, police, social workers, etc.) in *preventing* and *responding* to violence against children? What education and training programmes exist? Is there a Code of Conduct for the associated professionals with clear standards of practice to address violence against children?
- 3) What needs to be done to meet the planned priority commitments? (What steps, activities, interventions need to happen next?) *Note: These are key questions to be discussed during the workshop sessions.*
- 4) Who/which is the lead Department in the Ministry responsible for implementation for each priority response?
- 5) Who/which is the secondary Department (or supporting partners and agencies) responsible for implementation?
- 6) What is the time frame to act on each priority response? I.e. what is achievable within the next 6 months, the next 12 months, and so on until the end of the national plans' timeframe?
- 7) What are the budgetary implications of each priority response? Are these costed within the Ministry Medium Term Expenditure Framework (or equivalent)? If not planned in your expenditure framework, how much will each response cost to implement and are partners (CSO's, donors, etc.) available to support costs?
- 8) How is each response going to be monitored? How will it be evaluated? What are the key measures we want to look at in evaluating the response steps?
- 9) Are there other ministries or civil society stakeholders key to the national response that are not yet involved in the MSTF?

ANNEX 6 – SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR ACTION PLAN

Part I: Background

- The World Report on Violence against Children (2006)
- Results of the Violence Against Children Survey
- National context and framework
- International Instruments

Part II: An Integrated Multi-Sector Response to Violence

Vision and Mission of the National Plan

Implementation Strategy: Sector by Sector

Priority Responses

- Community Development, Gender and Children
- Social Welfare
- Health
- HIV and AIDS
- Justice:
 - Constitutional and Legal Affairs
 - Judiciary
 - Attorney General's Chambers/ Department of Public Prosecution (DPP)
 - Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance
 - Ministry of Home Affairs –Prisons and Department for Social Welfare/ Juvenile Justice
- Police Force
- Education
- Local Government
- Civil Society
- The Religious Community

Institutional Arrangements

Part III: Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Results Framework

ANNEX 7 – SAMPLE QUARTERLY REPORT MODEL

**National Plan of Action to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children
Quarterly Progress Report**

Reporting Sector: [e.g. Department of Social Welfare]

Reporting period: [e.g. Sept, Oct, Nov 2013]

I. PURPOSE

The overall objective of the *Quarterly Progress Report* is to provide an account of progress and achievements toward implementation of the *National Plan of Action to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children*

II. RESULTS

The following results have been agreed to as part of the *Priority Responses, Working Together to Stop Violence Against Children*:

Priority Outcome: e.g. An integrated system to prevent and respond to violence against children strengthened and expanded.

The following progress has been made during the reporting period:

| Output 1 | Planned Activities | Actions Taken | Progress to Date | Amount Spent | Constraints/Remarks |
|--|---|---------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Regulations under the Law of the Child Act issued and implemented, providing a clear framework for child protection | Develop, adopt and disseminate child protection regulations for referrals, investigations, assessments, decision-making, care planning, places of safety, | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| services, with explicit mandates for all relevant actors in the child protection system | emergency placements, care orders and supervision orders | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | |
| Output 2 | Planned Activities | Actions Taken | Progress to Date | Amount Spent | Constraints/Remarks |
| | | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | |
| Output 3 | Planned Activities | Actions Taken | Progress to Date | Amount Spent | Constraints/Remarks |
| | | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | |
| Output 4 | Planned Activities | Actions Taken | Progress to Date | Amount Spent | Constraints/Remarks |
| | | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | |

Total amount spent=

III. FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION

This section is a provisional report on the *financial implementation status*. This section should include **total planned budget over the full program period for 12 months**, funds available, funds off budget and expenditures to date. The expenditure to date should match the total amount spent above.

| Planned Budget | Funds Available (planned) | Funds Available (off budget) | Expenditure to Date |
|----------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | |

Implementing Partner:

Submitted by: Name & Signature: _____

Date: _____

Multi-Sector Task Force:

Reviewed By: (Name & Signature): _____
(Designation)

Date: _____

ANNEX 8 –SAMPLE YEARLY PROGRESS REPORT MODEL

| Priority responses | Update against priority responses | Priority Activity per Response | Expenditures against planned Budget | Update/Progress |
|--|---|--|---|-----------------|
| By 2015, the Police Force rolls out Gender and Children's Desks (GCDs) in all Police Stations. | Police Gender and Children's Desk's rolled out in 3 Police Stations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rehabilitate Class A police stations of Lake zone regions, Southern zone regions and 3 regions - Procure office and facilities and furniture for each Police GCD. - Ensure the GCDs are appropriately staffed. - Conduct tailor made training on the Establishment and Operationalization of Gender and Children's Desks to police officers. - Conduct annual monitoring and evaluation of Police GCDs | Planned= 279,828,000 Reported expenditure= xxx | 3 GCDs added |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>By 2015, the Police Force ensures all Gender and Children's Desks are staffed with trained officers competent on child sensitive interviews.</p> | <p>361 Police Officers working in the Gender and Children Desks have been trained on how to deal with Gender and Children cases.</p> <p>Development of Guidelines for the Establishment and Operations of GCDs and the Standard Operating Procedures for handling cases of child abuse.</p> | <p>-Conduct training needs assessment on gender and children's affairs in TPF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ -A standardized training package will be developed and used for GCD officers, for use by the Police and CSOs training desk officers, including training on the Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of GCDs and the Standard Operating Procedures for handling cases of child abuse. ▣ -Dissemination, Sensitization and Advocacy of Child Abuse Investigation procedures. ▣ -Conduct tailor made training on Trafficking in women and children. ▣ -Conduct specialized training on handling GBV, trafficking and VAC cases. -Sensitize senior police officers on GBV, LCA, Anti Trafficking in Persons Act and VAC cases. | <p>Planned= 278,100,000</p> <p>Reported expenditure= xxxx</p> | <p>- Training needs assessment underway</p> <p>-A standardized training package has been developed and tested. Translation into Kiswahili being finalized. The package includes Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of GCDs and the Standard Operating Procedures for handling cases of child abuse.</p> |
|---|---|---|---|---|



Together for girls

Ending violence against children