**MPTF FOR UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT**

**NARRATIVE progress report**

**REPORTING PERIOD: 1 january – 31 December 2012**

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| Part A. Meeting Information(To be completed by the UN Action Secretariat) | | |
| **RMC Meeting No:** | **Project[[1]](#footnote-1) No:** UNA014 | |
| **Date of Meeting:** | **RMC members in attendance at meeting:** | |
| Part B. Project Summary(To be completed by the Participating UN Organization) | | |
| **Date of Submission: 08/03/2012** | **Participating UN Organization(s):** UNFPA | |
| **Participating UN Organization receiving funds:**  UNFPA | |
| **Focal Point of the Participating UN Organization(s):**  Name: Erin Kenny, UNFPA New York  Telephone: (+1) 212 297 4981  Email: [ekenny@unfpa.org](mailto:ekenny@unfpa.org) | **Project Title:** Developing a BiH Strategy and Strengthening Response to Sexual Violence in the Balkans | |
| **Project Location(s):**  Bosnia and Herzegovina, Balkans | |
| **UN Action pillar of activity**:  Advocacy  Knowledge building  Support to UN system at country level | **Projected Project Duration:**  1 June 2010 – 30 June 2013 | |
| **Proposed project, if approved, would result in:**  New Project  Continuation of previous funding until  Other (explain  No-cost extension: (from – to) | **Total Project Budget:**  US $ (including 7% of indirect support costs)  **Amount of MPTF funds requested:**  Project Extension (Remaining Funds) US $  **Percentage of indirect support costs from MPTF contribution:** 7% | |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Projected Annual Disbursements:** | 2012  $ | 2013  $ | | **Projected Annual Commitments:** | 2012  $ | 2013  $ | | |  |

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| Narrative Summary |

1. **Overview**

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) witnessed mass rapes, sexual torture, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence directed against women, men and children during the war in 1992 – 1995. The war resulted in an estimated 20,000 rape victims from all ethnic groups, and an unknown number of children conceived by violence. Several hundred men were also subjected to sexual violence, including sexual assaults and castrations, primarily in detention settings.

The legal framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina has not dealt with the survivors of conflict related sexual violence in an adequate manner. General public interest, as well as overall social status of the survivors of these crimes, is at dissatisfactory level. The phenomenon of conflict related sexual violence is still perceived as a private matter, even though it is formally recognized as a public problem and a human rights issue. Despite the progress BiH has made in terms of advancing human rights and gender equality, the women survivors of conflict related sexual violence are still not sufficiently protected, and some of the rights guaranteed by the BiH laws are not fully respected.

In 2010 UNFPA formalized its partnership up with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees in order to develop a comprehensive programme for improved access to services to victims of conflict related sexual violence. However, in a political context such as BiH any activities that include victims of the war 1992-1995 demand high political sensitivity and ability to manoeuvre within the complex and decentralized structure of the state.

**Purpose of the project**

The overall goal of the proposed project is to develop a programme to enhance service provision for survivors of sexual violence in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1. **Summary of Achievements (until the end of February 2013)**

**Strategy 1:Provide catalytic support at the country level to develop a BiH Strategy to address sexual violence in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina.**

The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR), with financial and technical support from UNFPA, formed an inter-agency Expert Team (ET) for development of the Programme for the Victims of Wartime Rape, Sexual Abuse and Torture in BiH (the Programme). Throughout 2010-2012 the ET worked on finalization of the draft Programme using a carefully designed methodology in order to ensure an inclusive and transparent process and participation from all key actors – representatives of the legislative and executive power from all the levels and all administrative entities, health sector, the justice sector, victim associations and the civil society. During the development of the Programme twelve (12) consultative meetings and two (2) focus group meetings were organized throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to properly inform the ET about the problems and issues faced by the survivors. The final draft of the Programme was finalized by the end of 2012 and contains four (4) key segments for improvement of the status of survivors of conflict related sexual violence: 1) ensuring legal and psychological support to victims that are now witnesses in war crime cases; 2) strengthening capacities of service providers; 3) sensitizing the general public; and 4) building partnership between the governmental and non-governmental sectors. The Programme was unanimously endorsed by the final round table organized as part of the public discussion procedure in December 2012. In addition to the Programme, the ET worked on a draft generic Protocol for Cooperation whose main purpose is to operationalize the service-provision aspects of the Programme. The intention is to have key service providers and government institutions at the local level sign the Protocols and thus create referral mechanisms. Through referral mechanisms different local level institutions and organizations fulfil their obligations to protect and promote human rights of victims of violence by ensuring that the right service is provided on time and by the adequate institution, in accordance to the specific need of a particular survivor.

The draft Programme should be adopted by the state-level government. However, before such adoption can take place the entity level governments need to endorse the draft. The “political” endorsement of the draft document is however slowed down by the recent government crises taking place within both entities (both entity governments have resigned and new governments are yet to be formed).

While waiting for the state and entity level governments to endorse the Programme UNFPA is working closely with the representatives of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees to identify pilot locations for signing of the pilot Protocols for Cooperation and development of Local Municipal Action Plans. This process is slowed down by the lack of state and entity level political endorsement of the Programme forcing the UNFPA and the MHRR to shift the focus from pushing for signing and implementation of the Programme and Protocol, to identifying key stakeholders in selected pilot locations, holding initial meetings with them, and planning for a needs assessment exercise to be conducted once the buy-in from the local level communities is ensured.

The work on the Programme was complemented by our advocacy efforts. During 2012 an Advocacy Strategy for conflict related sexual violence was developed for a five year period proposing a set of activities that can be further developed and implemented either in support of the existing project (if funding is available) or that can be used for development of a follow up project. Furthermore, a professional photographer took over 100 photos and portraits of women victims of war showing their everyday lives and struggle to achieve basic human rights. The photos will be presented through a monograph, first of its kind, both internationally and locally. During the course of 2012 preparatory work for the monograph was conducted including picture taking and ensuring additional funds from the Norwegian Embassy. The purpose of the monograph is two-fold. It provides (visual) insight into the realities of the survivors of conflict related sexual violence as well as reinforces the advocacy efforts in eliminating stigma based on lack of information and understanding. It finally assists in mobilizing political and financial support in strengthening institutional response to this issue.

**Strategy 2: Review of the obstacles within BiH justice sector and services that are currently being provided (to better inform the BiH strategy) and support the development of Municipal Action Plans.**

At the beginning of 2012 a state-wide needs assessment of key service providers and policy makers relevant for conflict related sexual violence was conducted and analysis and recommendations were used to further inform the drafting of the Programme – 112 local level institutions and 26 NGOs throughout BiH were surveyed.

**Strategy 3:Revive and support regional women’s networking and global advocacy for implementation of SC1820/1888/1960**

A conference titled *Ensuring justice, reparations and rehabilitation for victims of conflict related sexual violence* was held on 5-6 September in Sarajevo with over 100 participants coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia. The evaluation of the conference showed that it was highly successful and several recommendations that emerged at the conference provided a good basis for UNFPAs and MHRRs further work. The conference was attended by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.

The conference pointed out several issues that were common for the survivors’ lives in the post-conflict context of the countries in the region:

* The number of war crime cases involving sexual violence that have been prosecuted remain extremely low– at the same time fight against impunity remains on top of the priority list for the victims;
* The victims of conflict related sexual violence remain socially and economically marginalized –none of the countries in the region (Croatia, Kosova, Serbia, BiH) have comprehensive reparations programmes, housing politics, educational support or alike;
* Complicated legal frameworks, or complete absence of rights for victims of wartime rape, impede access to affordable health and mental care – at the same time unhealed war traumas are intensifying, leading to deterioration of survivors’ health and general wellbeing;
* State services for survivors of conflict related sexual violence have thus far remained mostly absent – in the meantime NGOs have stepped in and played an important role in assisting the victims

In December 2012 UNFPA and MHRR representatives co-organized a meeting with the Chair of the informal group *Friends of Bosnia and Herzegovina* at European Parliament in Brussels, Ms. Emine Bozkurt. The group gathered different Members of the Parliament and other relevant stakeholders around issues relevant for accession of Bosnia into the European Union. The purpose of the meeting was to present to the members of the Friends of Bosnia and other EU institutions and independent organizations working with EU institutions, the issues and problems faced by the survivors of conflict related sexual violence. It also aimed at presenting the draft Programme and mobilizing political support for its adoption and implementation, and to advocate at the EU level for the need to address this issue and ensuring that the human rights of the survivors are fulfilled in line with international obligations of BiH.

In terms of regional networking and global advocacy UNFPA, together with UN Women, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), TRIAL, and other international organizations have been discussing the need for establishment of a resource centre with focus on political, economic, and social rights of women. As envisioned the resource centre would be an independent, specialist body to monitor and advocate for strengthening the rights of women ; it will be a regional knowledge and resource centre, able to provide expertise in this field both to decision makers and NGOs, and to act as facilitator of a regional women’s network. In 2012 two (2) joint round tables were organized in order to discuss how to proceed with the establishment of the resource centre, what should be the main focus of its work, and what are the expectations of the CSOs working on the implementation of UN SCR 1325.

In cooperation with UNFPA WILPF also conducted an in-depth research and consultations among NGOs by canvassing input from BiH civil society organizations (particularly women’s organizations), academic community, and legal professional and governmental institutions in order to finalise the issues of primary importance and the skills needed in the resource centre.

In addition, parallel to the official country visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Ms. Rashida Manjoo, UNFPA in cooperation with UN Women organized a round table discussion with women NGOs and the UN Special Rapporteur with the aim of looking at the BiH experiences and prospects in terms of working on women empowerment from divers set of angels (political, economic, social etc.) against different global experiences.

1. The term “project” is used for projects, programmes and joint programmes. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)