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UN survey of 10,000 men in Asia and the Pacific reveals why some men use violence against women and girls

Bangkok, 10 September 2013— A UN study of 10,000 men in Asia and the Pacific, released today, found that overall nearly half of those men interviewed reported using physical and/or sexual violence against a female partner, ranging from 26 percent to 80 percent across the sites studied. Nearly a quarter of men interviewed reported perpetrating rape against a woman or girl, ranging from 10 percent to 62 percent across the sites.

Men were interviewed across nine sites in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea. The study, entitled ‘Why Do Some Men Use Violence Against Women and How Can We Prevent It? Quantitative Findings from the UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific’ was conducted by Partners for Prevention, a regional joint programme of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in Asia and the Pacific. It asked men about their use and experiences of violence, gendered attitudes and practices, childhood, sexuality, family life and health.

“This study reaffirms that violence against women is preventable, not inevitable” says James Lang, Programme Coordinator, Partners for Prevention. “Prevention is crucial because of the high prevalence of men’s use of violence found across the study sites and it is achievable because the majority of the factors associated with men’s use of violence *can be changed.*”

Regarding rape, the study found that in the sites where the survey was conducted:

- Men begin perpetrating violence at much younger ages than previously thought. Half of those who admitted to rape reported their first time was when they were teenagers; 23 percent of men who raped in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, and 16 percent in Cambodia were 14 years or younger when they first committed this crime.
- Of those men who had admitted to rape, the vast majority (72-97 percent in most sites) did not experience any legal consequences, confirming that impunity remains a serious issue in the region.
- Across all sites, the most common motivation that men cited for rape was related to sexual entitlement - a belief that men have a right to sex with women regardless of consent. Over 80 percent of men who admitted to rape in sites in rural Bangladesh and China gave this response.

- Overall, 4 percent of respondents said they had perpetrated gang rape against a woman or girl, ranging from 1 to 14 percent across the various sites. This is the first time we have data from such a large sample of men on the perpetration of gang rape.

The study's findings reaffirm that violence against women is an expression of women's subordination and inequality in the private and public spheres. The findings show how men's use of violence against women is associated with men's personal histories and practices, within a broader context of structural inequalities.

For example, men who reported having perpetrated violence against a female partner were significantly more likely to:

- Have gender-inequitable attitudes and try to control their partners. For instance, in Bangladesh and Cambodia men who had highly controlling behaviour were more than twice as likely to perpetrate partner violence than those who did not use controlling behaviour.
- Have experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse as a child, or witnessed the abuse of their mother. More than 65 percent of men in Bougainville, PNG and the site in China reported experiencing emotional abuse or neglect as children and these men were at least twice as likely to use violence against a female partner.
- Have practices that celebrate male toughness and sexual performance, such as being involved in fights and paying for sex. In Indonesia and Sri Lanka, men who reported having sex with a sex worker or transactional sex were two times more likely to use violence against a partner than those who had not.

To prevent violence against women, the study recommends we:

- Make violence against women unacceptable, for example through community mobilization programmes and engagement with people who influence culture;
- Promote non-violent and caring ways to be a man, for example through sustained school-based or sports-based education programmes;
- Address child abuse and promote healthy families, for example through parenting programmes, comprehensive child protection systems and policies to end corporal punishment;
- Work with young people, with a particular focus on boys and adolescents, to understand consent, and healthy sexuality, and to foster respectful relationships;
- End impunity for men who use violence against women, particularly marital rape, through criminalization of all forms of violence against women, and promote legal sector reform to ensure effective access to justice.
- Ensure the full empowerment of women and girls and eliminate gender discrimination.

Emma Fulu, Research Specialist for Partners for Prevention says, "We hope to see this new knowledge

used for more informed programmes and policies to end violence against women. Given the early age of violence perpetration we found among some men, we need to start working with younger boys and girls than we have in the past. We also need laws and policies that clearly express that violence against women is never acceptable, as well as policies and programmes to protect children and end the cycles of violence that extend across many people's lives."

Partners for Prevention is a regional joint programme of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in Asia and the Pacific.

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Notes to editors:

About Partners for Prevention and the UN Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific

- For the full report of UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific go to www.partners4prevention.org.
- The study was conducted in nine sites in six countries and the data is representative of those sites; however it is not representative of the whole Asia-Pacific region nor the entire individual countries (except in Cambodia).

Partners for Prevention was established in 2008 to coordinate and strengthen efforts to prevent gender-based violence across Asia and the Pacific. Today, it is comprised of a team of programme specialists based in Bangkok, regional UN advisers in Bangkok, Delhi and Bonn, and UN partners based in country offices around the region. The joint programme brings together the combined strengths of the four partner agencies - and a wide array of other partners - in a concerted effort to promote evidence- and theory-based approaches to prevention, including those that work with boys and men alongside girls and women, to transform gender inequitable attitudes, practices and social norms. The programme has

received financial support from the Governments of Australia, the United Kingdom, Norway and Sweden.

www.partners4prevention.org