

## High-Level Panel Discussion

### Safeguarding the rights of girls in the criminal justice system

#### Preventing violence, stigmatization and deprivation of liberty

Organized by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children (SRSG-VAC) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with the support of the Governments of Austria, Chile, Norway and Thailand

*16 October at 8.30 am – 9.45 am*

*Room 7, Conference Building, United Nations HQ, New York*



### Background

Gender discrimination and gender-based violence remain pervasive with long lasting consequences on the lives of millions of girls. International human rights legal instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and norms and standards adopted in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice provide a solid framework for preventing and responding to violence against girls in both public and private spheres.

In order to bridge the gap between human rights obligations and practice, the international community has also developed comprehensive international standards, including the United

Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules); and the United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, adopted by the General Assembly last fall. However, the implementation of these standards remains a serious challenge.

Criminal justice systems are crucial to prevent incidents of violence, bring perpetrators to justice, and ensure recovery and social reintegration for victims. Like any other group in society, women and girls are entitled to nothing less. However, the social status of women and girls, together with deeply-rooted discriminatory attitudes toward them often compromise responses of the criminal justice system to address gender-based violence committed against them.

As a result, rather than benefitting from protection, rehabilitation and redress, girls who fall victim to violence and exploitation run the risk of being criminalized and exposed to harassment, unlawful deprivation of liberty and inhuman punishment. At the same time, perpetrators of violence against girls are often not held accountable for their actions or deterred from committing further criminal acts. As a consequence, and despite progress made, violence against girls and women remains a global pandemic and an immense barrier to development.

As a response to these significant challenges, the Agenda 2030 identifies robust goals and targets to: ***Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*** (goal 5); ***Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*** (goal 16) and to ***End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children*** (target 16.2).

### **The objectives of the panel discussion**

- To discuss strategies and promising practices that can strengthen the protection of girls from all forms of violence in the criminal justice, ensure their access to justice and prevent deprivation of liberty
- To launch the new thematic report by the SRSG-VAC '*Safeguarding the rights of girls in the criminal justice system - Preventing violence, stigmatization and deprivation of liberty*'
- To promote cooperation at national, regional and international level to accelerate progress in this area and mobilize action to achieve Goals 5 and 16 in the sustainable development goals agenda

## **Participants**

Governments, UN agencies, representatives from international and regional organizations, academia and civil society.

## **Programme**

### ***Opening remarks***

H.E. Ambassador, Mr Jan Kickert, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations

Ms Gloria Cid, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations

Ms Anniken Enersen, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

### ***Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the protection of the rights of girls***

Ms Simone Monasebian, Director, UNODC New York Office

### ***Introduction of new report 'Safeguarding the rights of girls in the criminal justice system - Preventing violence, stigmatization and deprivation of liberty'***

Ms Marta Santos Pais, SRSG on Violence against Children

### ***The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the rights of girls in criminal justice***

Mr Benyam Dawit Mezmur, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

### ***Girls in the criminal justice system and tools to protect them***

Ms Andrea Huber, Policy Director, Penal Reform International

### ***Challenges to make criminal justice systems more inclusive and participatory for girls***

Ms Cristina Goñi, Secretary General, International Juvenile Justice Observatory

## **Q&A**

### ***Closing remarks***

H.E. Ambassador, Mr Virachai Plasai, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations

Moderated by Marta Santos Pais, SRSG-VAC

***A light breakfast will be served from 08.00 am onwards***