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**Synergies and gaps identified in the National Action Plan to  
Prevent Violence Against Women 2014-2018 (NAPVAW) to inform  
the development of the  
National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against  
Children (NAPVAC)**

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## **Synergies and gaps identified in the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2014-2018 (NAPVAW) to inform the development of the National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children (NAPVAC)**

On 15 February 2015, the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia officially launched its second National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2014-2018 (NAPVAW). The action plan builds on the first action plan addressing violence against women, implemented 2009-2012.

During the process of drafting the National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Children, it is important to consider how these two action plans can work together to provide the best outcome for women and children and ensure that they together provide a comprehensive response.

Through an examination of the strategies and activities foreseen under the NAPVAW, this analysis attempts to draw out any overlaps between the NAPVAW and NAPVAC both in relation to issues addressed, strategies and/or activities, possibilities for joint efforts around issues and any gaps in the NAPVAW that may be possible to address under the National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children (NAPVAC).

As the implementation of the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women started early 2015, some activities will be under way, while others will still be in the process of being formulated and planned for.

The analysis considers each strategic area in turn and then addresses overall considerations.

### **Strategic area 1: Primary Prevention**

Strategic area 1 under the NAPVAW focuses on Primary Prevention and plans for a number of actions in under the areas: Coordination and Cooperation, Education and Youth, Family and Children, Community and Workplace and Media and Culture.

Some of the activities planned for, although aimed to address violence against women specifically, take a fairly wide approach and thereby impact on violence against children in a wider sense. For example, planned activities include: promoting positive parenting through building positive parenting skills, and working with school management and relevant authorities to promote primary prevention practices and violence free schools through combined interventions including: ending corporal punishment in schools, providing sensitive SRHR information and services, and strengthening the capacity of teachers and staff members to recognize and appropriately respond to violent behaviours and practices.

The NAPVAW provides limited details on what specific actions and programmes are planned to address these issues and more information would be needed to understand the full scope of what they include, however these activities have the potential to also address violence against children more widely.

When considering prevention activities under the NAPVAC, it would therefore be important to have an understanding of what actions are planned under the NAPVAW in order to be able to concert efforts under both action plans. There is a strong possibility to capitalise on these interventions for the NAPVAC, building on and/or linking up to planned activities creating a more comprehensive response and potentially reducing costs and efforts.

Corporal punishment in educational settings was highlighted as a key issue by the Cambodian Violence Against Children Study ('CVACS')<sup>1</sup> and would be an important area from NAPVAC to address. Taking in to consideration the activities planned under the NAPVAW will allow for the formulation of activities under the NAPVAC to fill gaps, complement and work in conjunction with already planned activities.

In the qualitative study part of the CVACS, children reported violence between children usually in the form of bullying and fighting taking place in school as well as children being beaten by children older than them.<sup>2</sup>

Under the strategic area of education and youth, the NAPVAW includes school-based and out-of-school interventions for children, youth and adolescents to build their skills to develop and promote respectful relationships and norms that empower all girls and women. The indicator for this activity aims to strengthen the school curriculum and ensure that it incorporates a module addressing VAW as well as respect for human rights and laws and policies. Depending on what activities are planned, this may provide an opportunity to include a wider focus on respectful relationships, for example addressing peer violence and bullying as well. If changes to the curriculum are planned, it would be useful to analyse how violence against children is currently included and how any changes to the curriculum can address issues of violence in an encompassing way.

The NAPVAW further aims to target rape and gang rape specifically through the use of peer-group approaches working with teenage boys to promote norms that condemn rape and gang rape beliefs and practices. Although the CVACS could not provide estimates on the involvement of multiple perpetrators in rape, figures for all types of sexual abuse were analyzed finding that more than 1 in 10 females (11.9%) and over a quarter of males (26.4%) aged 18 to 24 reported that the first incident of child sexual abuse was perpetrated by more than one person.<sup>3</sup> As the NAPVAW already plans for a specific action in relation to this issue, it should be considered under the NAPVAC if further and alternative actions will be useful and if so how these are best formulated to work in conjunction with the NAPVAW. For instance, the NAPVAC could cross-reference the peer group interventions in the NAPVAW and could add supporting initiatives to build on this, including for instance, out of school peer programmes delivered through community or youth groups.

The NAPVAW also plans for a media code of conduct to improve media responses and reporting on violence against women. Under the core commitments a media code of conduct is also to be developed and implemented on violence against children. This provides a clear scope for cooperation and joint action.

## **Strategic area 2: Legal Protection and Multi-sectoral Services**

Strategic area 2 plans for a concerted effort in providing accessible, appropriate and quality services and a coordinated response to the varied needs of survivors of VAW. This includes specific improvements and strengthening of processes and services provided by Police, Health, Legal Aid and Social Services. The NAPVAW, for example, plans for the development of Minimum Standards for Service guidelines based on a client-centered, human rights based and socially inclusive approach as

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (2014) Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey. p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (2014) Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey. p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (2014) Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey. p. 74.

well as for a referral system to improve the ability of service providers to identify violence against women and refer survivors to services based on their needs and own choices.

As many of the challenges faced by women and children who are victims of violence are likely to be similar due to gaps in the system and limited availability of services, this strategic area provides a useful framework for consideration of addressing these gaps also under the NAPVAC. However, any development of standards, codes of conducts and referral systems etc. under the NAPVAC will need to specifically consider the needs of children and be in line with the international law and standards relating to children. There are a well elaborated set of standards relating to children who are victims of violence, and who become witnesses in criminal proceedings. These will need to be included in the development of any standards, protocols, law reform and capacity building plans.

Close cooperation around the development of standards and strengthening of services should however be considered to ensure that different protocols work together, providing an encompassing response for women and children victims of violence. In some areas it may be possible to consider joint protocols. For instance, the development of Minimum Standards of Service, scheduled under the NAPVAW (strategic area 2.2.2.1 – Multi-sectoral response system) could explicitly incorporate child rights standards and child-friendly principles, including incorporation of the best interests of the child principle. This could ensure that professionals must make decisions that affect children in accordance with what is in their best interests (rather than in accordance with other, perhaps competing interests). Incorporation of child rights standards into Minimum Standards of Service could also be considered for activities under strategic areas 3.2.2.2 – primary counselling; 3.2.2.4 – Health Services; and 3.2.2.6 – Social services and rehabilitation.

The activity to review and develop police operational standards and codes of conduct (under strategic area 3.2.2.3 – Effective police protection) could also incorporate child rights standards and child-friendly principles, including incorporation of the best interests of the child principle.

The activity to develop a referral system to improve service providers' ability to identify VAW and refer survivors to services (under strategic area 2.2.2.1 – Multi-sectoral response system) could include the development of a joint protocol setting out identification and referral of cases of violence against children.

The NAPVAW also plans for the increased availability of free legal services. As child victims of violence also lack access to these services, a scale up of services more widely also has the potential to improve the situation for children. However, for these services to be accessible and appropriate for children, it is essential to ensure that they are child-friendly, taking into consideration children's specific needs and vulnerabilities, and incorporating relevant international standards. However, a joined-up approach between VAW and VAC initiatives / strategies would potentially provide better services both for women and children. For instance, the NAPVAC could support the NAPVAW activities aimed at improving access to justice for survivors of violence against women (strategic area 3.2.2.5) by supporting the creation of a pool of legal aid lawyers specialised in working with victims of violence (including women and children).

### **Strategic area 3: Formulating and Implementing Policies and Laws**

Under Strategic area 3, the NAPVAW plans for a review of the implementation of laws to identify successes, challenges and gaps in their implementation and then to advocate for the adoption and amendment of laws and policies.

The CVACS found that service- seeking behaviours were low and one reason mentioned, especially by older males, was inconsistencies in police and judicial outcomes.<sup>4</sup> Further, as the CVACS did not focus on the implementation of laws, this would be an important area to review. As the two action plans would potentially overlap on issues in relation to violence against girls and children as victims of domestic violence, close collaboration would be essential to ensure that these issues are addressed in a coherent and coordinated way and that there are no gaps.

The Gap Analysis of Child Protection Legislation and the Analysis of Domestic Laws Related to Violence Against Children in ASEAN States<sup>5</sup> identified gaps in legislation in relation to VAC, and this study should also be of use for developing the NAPVAW. It should be considered how efforts to advocate for amendments to laws may be linked up and where responsibility will lie for areas that overlap.

The NAPVAW further foresees a review of sectoral policies within ministries on the implementation of violence against women interventions to ensure that key ministries have violence against women implementation plans and budgets. A similar review would be beneficial in relation to VAC and any collaboration and overlap should be considered.

#### **Strategic Area 4: Capacity building**

Strategic area 4 aims to increase the capacity and resources of key sectors. It plans for an evaluation of capacities of all key actors both at national and sub national level in relation to the understanding of VAW, cooperation and collaboration skills and understanding of best practice in each sector and the implementation of a capacity building plan based on this assessment. It covers all sectors including first responders, Judges, Prosecutors and other professionals in the justice system as well as Health Workers.

Capacity building in relation to VAC will most definitely also be an area of focus under the NAPVAC. Where appropriate, these efforts may be linked up to provide capacity building across the two areas without taking focus away from their specificities. Activities aimed at assessing and increasing the capacity of all key actors at the National and Sub-national level on understanding and responding to VAW (activities 1 and 2) along with specific activities aimed at particular professionals and professionals training bodies (first responders, Judges, Prosecutors, Police, Health Care Workers) (activities 3 – 7) could be joined up with capacity building activities in the NAPVAW. This is important, as it is likely that any capacity building initiatives would target the same professionals. However, it is key that child-specific training is delivered within any planned capacity building initiatives aimed at addressing VAW.

It is unclear what kind of capacity building the NAPVAW foresees under its capacity development strategy and whether this will involve a review of and strengthening of formal pre and in service training for professionals. It would be most beneficial for the NAPVAC to consider a wide range of training opportunities and capacity building but specifically to ensure incorporation of VAC in pre and in service training for all professionals working with children.

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<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (2014) Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey. p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Coram Children's Legal Centre (2014) *Legal Protection from Violence: Analysis of Domestic Laws Related to Violence Against Children in ASEAN Member States*.

## **Strategic area 5: Review, Monitoring and Evaluation**

Strategic area 5 focuses on developing a comprehensive system for data collection and monitoring, analysis and evidence based reporting of violence against women and the NAPVAW. It plans for a comprehensive system for data collection and monitoring including a range of stakeholders, as well as improvement in the quality of data and harmonisation between and among ministries and with other stakeholders.

The core commitments already foresee that MoWA will include key indicators of violence against children in the Data Collection and Follow-up System on violence, to be developed to monitor and evaluate the 2nd National Action Plan on Violence Against Women (NAPVAW II).

It should therefore be considered how the established mechanisms under the NAPVAW may provide for already established structures and mechanisms, and where data is already being collected and where gaps prevail. Some of the data potentially collected under the M&E framework for the NAPVAW would also be useful and applicable to monitor issues in relation to VAC. Thus it should be considered how these systems can work together to reduce duplication.

The NAPVAW also includes activities to undertake research on the prevalence of violence against women as well as on research on women with increased risk of violence and research contributing to a better understanding of different types of violence against women and good practice models. It is likely that there will be areas of overlap between the two action plans and information and data needs will also overlap. Considering any research plans and where there are gaps in information and data would have the possibility to limit individual efforts and provide opportunities to benefit from efforts under each of the plans conjointly.

### **Frameworks and mechanisms**

The NAPVAW plans for the establishment of coordination mechanisms as well as strengthening of ones that exist, for example for primary prevention at sub-national and local levels as well as for a response mechanism between ministries, institutions, civil society, private sector and other key actors.

It should be considered how the establishment of the mechanism under the NAPVAW could provide a platform and/or guidance when aiming to create a similar mechanism under the VAC action plan. Many stakeholders will be the same and it would be useful to limit the number of different mechanisms overburdening stakeholders. It would also be useful to benefit from already identified stakeholders and cooperation and collaboration and links.

### **Gaps and general areas for consideration**

Unsurprisingly, there are gaps in the NAPVAW, and not all objectives and areas relating to VAC will be covered in an action plan that is designed to address the issue of VAW specifically. While there are obvious overlaps and possibilities for actions on both plans to take place in a joined-up manner, which should strengthen activities under both action plans, specific measures will be needed to ensure that VAC is comprehensively addressed.

The table below highlights gaps in the way that the NAPVAW can be applied to address the issue of VAC. It is based on the gaps found in the core commitments, and highlights gaps and synergies between the two action plans.

## Annex: Table

Core commitments	Gaps found in core commitments	Relevant activities / areas in NAPVAW	Synergies or gaps identified and recommendations
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	Several ministries / agencies have made a general commitment to devise indicators to monitor violence against children at the national level. However, there is no clear commitment to developing and implementing a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework for the National Action Plan.	The NAPVAW includes the establishment of a comprehensive system of data collection and monitoring to regularly collect data from line ministries, NGOs, research institutes, civil society, and the media for use by MoWA and other stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation of the NAPVAW.	There is a need for a strong M&E framework under the NAPVAC. Areas of overlap with the NAPVAW in relation to data collection should be considered and systems harmonised.
<b>Child Participation</b>	There is no commitment to involving children in developing policies and strategies that address VAC.	The NAPVAW makes reference to the importance of a wide range of stakeholders and the involvement of survivors and vulnerable groups of women. However, it is unclear how this is planned to be carried out. There are no activities planned specifically to address this issue. There is no specific reference to the participation of children in the NAPVAW.	There is a need to involve children as key stakeholders in the drafting, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of outcomes under the NAPVAC.
<b>Protection of specifically vulnerable groups of children</b>	There are no commitments made to addressing the needs of children who are particularly vulnerable, due to their identity, status or situation (beside several commitments relating to the needs of girls in particular).	The NAPVAW makes reference to groups of women particularly vulnerable to violence and in relation to the provision of services aims to target these groups specifically with information on services. However, information is very limited on what groups are considered and any further activities. There is no specific reference to vulnerable children/ girls.	The NAPVAC should ensure specific focus on groups of children that are particularly vulnerable to violence due to their identity, status and/ or situation.

<b>Best interest of the child</b>	There is no clear commitment to ensure that the best interests of the child is the primary consideration in all decisions and actions affecting children.	Due to its specific focus on women and girls, the NAPVAW does not mention the best interest principle.	It should be ensured that the NAPVAC includes a clear reference, where applicable, to that the best interest of the child is the primary consideration.
<b>Information and awareness raising</b>	There is no commitment to engage with media in social and behaviour change activities	The NAPVAW foresees a comprehensive information and communication strategy and campaign under media and culture for both national and sub-national levels to promote positive social norms, gender equality and peace. This includes for example radio programmes.	Under the NAPVAC it should be considered what activities already planned under the NAPVAW that could benefit from and would lend themselves to collaboration. At the same time the NAPVAC will need to identify specific gaps and activities that have a wider focus on violence against children.
<b>Access to complaints mechanisms</b>	There is a lack of clear commitment to ensuring child-friendly, accessible reporting / complaints mechanisms. The Core Commitments include ensuring that existing hotlines are harmonised, fully functional and easily accessible to children and families who want to report instances of violence and includes commitments to creating a gender-sensitive child abuse complaint system for children in care and for students in schools. However still does not ensure that independent, child-friendly reporting mechanisms are in place for making complaints against professionals who	Due to its specific focus on women and girls, the NAPVAW does not include any reference to child-friendly complaints mechanisms (apart from hotlines).	The NAPVAC should include the establishment of accessible and child friendly reporting/ complaints mechanisms. As there is no mention of such mechanisms in the NAPVAW this would be an important issue for the NAPVAC to consider.



	perpetrate acts of violence against children.		
<b>Vetting and barring system for professionals working with children</b>	There is a lack of reference to a vetting and barring system for professionals who work with children.	Due to its specific focus on women and girls, the NAPVAW does not include any specific mention of a vetting and barring system for professionals working with children.	The NAPVAC should consider the establishment of a vetting and barring system for professionals working with children. This would also benefit girl victims of violence and children victims of domestic violence where there is an overlap between the two action plans.
	The core commitments include limited reference to the need to ensure the use of positive disciplinary practices. While the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has made a commitment to 'promote the use of non-violent teaching and learning methods among education staff to eliminate and prevent physical punishment in schools', the National Action Plan should include specific measures to enhance the skills of teachers to use positive disciplinary measures as well as for parents through parenting programmes.	Under the NAPVAW, there are plans to address corporal punishment in educational settings under Strategic area 1 (primary prevention through working with school management and relevant authorities). It also plans for activities to build positive parenting skills.	Under the NAPVAC it should be considered what activities are planned in relation to promoting positive discipline under the NAPVAW. Cooperation and collaboration may strengthen efforts and activities under the NAPVAC can fill gaps, complement and work in conjunction with already planned activities under the NAPVAW.
<b>Case management, data sharing and data protection mechanisms</b>	No commitment to developing case management, data sharing and data protection mechanisms	Due to its specific focus the NAPVAW does not address this issue specifically.	The NAPVAC should consider including case management, data sharing and data protection mechanisms, ensuring that all processes and mechanisms are

			child friendly and incorporating relevant international standards.
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<b>Costing and budgeting</b>	There are limited commitments relating to budgeting for core activities.	The NAPVAW does not provide details on costing and the sources of funding in relation to the different activities.	Consideration should be taken under the NAPVAC to ensure that all activities are properly costing and that activities are included in ministerial budgets or that separate funding is provided to cover all activities. This is essential to ensure that implementation will be successful. In areas of overlap between the NAPVAC and NAPVAW there may be a possibility to share costs and to capitalise on investments.
<b>Training and capacity building of professionals</b>	Lack of specific focus on pre-service training of professionals	The NAPVAW plans for a comprehensive evaluation of capacities in all key sectors and the implementation of a capacity building plan based on this assessment. More details would be needed to understand what capacity building is planned and if there is a plan to focus on and update pre-service training for professionals.	Capacity building will be an important area also for the NAPVAC. More information on the planned activities under the NAPVAW would be needed to see how the two plans could work together in this area. However, it is likely that there will be opportunities for collaboration or joint actions in this area, both in areas of overlap and at times by providing capacity building across both areas when and if appropriate.

<b>SRHR education</b>	No commitment to strengthening sex and relationships education in schools / awareness raising for those not in school	The NAPVAW includes plans for providing SRHR information and services under the Strategic area for primary prevention. However, as the activity specifically mentions providing these services in schools it is not clear if there is a plan for how to reach out of school children.	The NAPVAW and NAPVAC should consider how to collaborate in this area. As activities are planned under the NAPVAW, the NAPVAC should consider activities that will work in conjunction with these or fill any gaps. An area of focus for the NAPVAC may be the provision of SRHR information for out of school children if the focus of the NAPVAW is only at education in schools.
<b>Legal and other support for child victims/ witnesses</b>	No commitment to ensuring legal or other appropriate support and representation for victims / witnesses and children in conflict with the law.	Due to its specific focus the NAPVAW does not address this issue specifically. However, the NAPVAW plans for the increased availability of free legal services which may also ensure better provision of these services for children. It is essential to ensure that these services are child-friendly, taking into consideration children's specific needs and vulnerabilities, and incorporating relevant international standards.	The NAPVAC should consider including the availability of legal and other support for child victims/ witnesses taking in to consideration children's specific needs and incorporating relevant international standards.
<b>Child friendly Court proceedings</b>	No commitment to ensuring that court proceedings involving child victims / witnesses are child-friendly	Due to its focus the NAPVAW does not address this issue specifically. However, this is an important issue especially for vulnerable victims as	The NAPVAC should consider including child friendly court proceedings. There may be a possibility for cooperation on this

		child victims of sexual and gender based violence.	especially in relation to victims of sexual and gender/based violence.
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