

**Commitments on Gender-Responsive Policing
and
Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls: ‘Building Trust and Confidence in
Communities’**

Introduction

Cultural changes within policing have been shown to have an impact on the way they interact with the public. Attitudes and behaviour towards women in the police may be carried over into the way the police engage with their local community. Professionally trained and equipped female officers can play a vital role in removing barriers women and girls face in navigating complex criminal justice systems, especially those who are most marginalized and are at greater risk of experiencing violence. When female officers are more visible, women and girls in the community are more likely to believe that their concerns are being heard and seriously addressed.

Deborah Friedl, President, IAWP, “Gender Responsive Policing has long been regarded as a vital component of building trust with the communities served, this principle applies to all countries and never more so than in these difficult times where we have seen trust and confidence in law enforcement shaken. Ensuring that our policies and practices encourage equality of protection for all citizens is an essential first step. However, GRP also requires internal examination and an assurance that that policies and culture reflect gender sensitivity and inclusion. In so doing, it will ensure that agencies are able to be properly reflective of the communities they serve”.

Improved criminal justice sector responses, however, are not only about increasing women’s participation in law enforcement. If we are to see *real* change, we must also address the many institutional and structural barriers, patriarchal systems and negative stereotyping around gender that are all too prevalent within security, police and judicial institutions.

When survivor-centred and rights-based approaches that are culturally and age-appropriate underpin the delivery of police and justice services and, when the safety of survivors and perpetrator accountability are at the heart of every action, then the police service becomes more gender-responsive, as well as representative of the communities it serves.

Gender-responsive policing is fundamentally about ensuring the needs of women and men, girls and boys are taken into account equally when delivering policing services as well as addressing the needs of those women and men working within policing and law enforcement.

Creating a fully gender-responsive policing service requires not only increasing the number of women, but empowering all officers, both male and female, to be victim/survivor-centred, gender-sensitive and trauma-informed when responding to **all** acts of crime and violence. This requires the professional development of law enforcement to be transformative in nature and for officers to be equipped to respond adequately to the diverse security needs of the

communities they serve. Equally important, a gender-responsive police service requires senior leadership to institutionalize gender-sensitive policies, strategies and accountability mechanisms that ensure effective operational leadership that is fit for purpose.

Commitment Aims

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to think differently and ‘build back better.’ UN Women is committed in the next five years to advancing this area of work through the *Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender-based Violence* – the first ever multi-stakeholder and inter-generational platform with the objective of creating a compelling political compact and driving long-term change to end gender-based violence. This partnership model builds on ways UN Women and partners are already supporting governments and other stakeholders within and outside the UN system in the area of ending violence against women and girls. Strengthening police and justice sector responses, as part of a multi-sectoral response, is firmly at the centre of this work, complementing efforts to strengthen laws and policies, prevention, data collection, use and analysis.

As part of the mission to ‘build back better’, UN Women and UNODC have partnered with the IAWP to drive a global campaign to gain widespread commitment among police and law enforcement associations, networks, organisations and institutions to promote the benefits of gender-responsive policing and gain support for the its implementation, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals 5 on ‘Gender Equality’ and 16 on ‘Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.’¹

By pledging to the *Commitments on Gender-Responsive Policing* you, your Association, Network, Organisation or Institution will be demonstrating a clear undertaking to embed gender-responsive policing, meaning that no individual or group are discriminated against or disadvantaged in the service provided to address their safety and security needs.

The Commitments on Gender-Responsive Policing will be continually updated as pledges are added/received and will be publicly available on the IAWP web site www.iawp.org

¹ https://sdgs.un.org/#goal_section

Commitments on Gender-responsive Policing

We pledge to promote the benefits of gender-responsive policing and supporting the creation of gender-responsive law enforcement institutions, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals 5 on ‘Gender Equality’ and 16 on ‘Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions’.

We publically commit to promoting gender-responsive policing by:

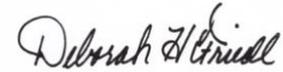
1. Committing to institutional change that will deliver gender-responsive police services that are accountable, transparent and representative of the communities they serve. This includes addressing and preventing harmful institutional gender bias, stereotypes and harassment and increasing women’s representation in policing/law enforcement.
2. Strengthening police practices on the prevention of violence against women and girls, including through participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships that address the causes and consequences of violence against women and girls.
3. Committing to transformative learning and professional development of police/law enforcement, including through police colleges and universities, to implement gender-responsive policing that is trauma-informed, perpetrator-focused and victim/survivor-centered.
4. Ensuring resources are committed to advancing stronger relationships with victim/survivor support services and organizations that represent the rights of women and girls in all their diversity.
5. Ensuring we demonstrate leadership to those we represent by taking positive steps to empowering and enabling them to deliver these commitments, to monitor and evaluate their impact at all levels of our respective organisations.

Police/Law Enforcement

Associations,

**Networks,
Organisations and Institutions:**

International Association of Women Police



President Deborah Friedl

Bellevue Police Department, Nebraska, USA

Ken Clay
Chief of Police

Centre for Law Enforcement and Public Health (CLEPH)

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