

Legislative Approaches to Address Violence against Women

Since the 1990s, countries across the world have adopted different approaches to legislating VAW. Most have either reformed general laws or inserted specific provisions within general laws, either incrementally or at one time. Many countries have also adopted special laws on VAW. For example, as of 2011, 125 countries had enacted special legislation on DV.³

Internationally, it is recommended that a consistent and comprehensive approach involving a country's constitutional, civil, criminal and administrative laws is essential when formulating legal responses to VAW. The law reflects culture, regulates behaviour, and provides a foundation for the prevention and response to VAW. Hence, legal reform must first consist of changes in a law's administration to ensure gender sensitive and efficient responses, particularly in relation to policing and court processes and improved access to justice. Second, efforts to promote respect for women's human rights, counter discriminatory social norms, and provide support to victims/survivors of VAW must also be established.

3. UN Women, "2011-2012 Progress of the World's Women: In Pursuit of Justice," 2011