Australia’s Comments
Draft Global Plan of Action to Strengthen the Role of the Health System to address Interpersonal Violence against Women and Girls

- Australia commends the World Health Organization (WHO) in producing the zero draft Global Plan of Action, (the Global Plan) which appropriately reflects resolution WHA 67.15 Strengthening the Role of the Health System in addressing Interpersonal Violence, in particular against Women and Girls.

- Australia supports the vision, goals, objectives and guiding principles of the plan.

- The Global Plan acknowledges the whole of government and whole of community action (primary prevention) required to address violence against women and their children, as well as the need to improve services (early intervention) that help address the effects of violence.

- Australia notes that the plan acknowledges that countries health system capacities are at different stages in responding to different forms of violence. In relation to developing countries, there may benefit in also acknowledging that implementation of necessary actions will require appropriate resourcing.

- We encourage the linkage between the Global Plan and implementation of existing programs that address violence, particularly violence against women and girls (VAWG), to avoid duplicating efforts.

- Women do not participate equitably in health sector governance, in particular planning and resource allocation. Australia suggests that there is an opportunity for the Global Plan to promote women’s leadership within the health sector.

- It may also be beneficial to have some acknowledgment of the role of the health system and health services for perpetrators of violence to address their behaviour in the Global Plan.

- Further clarity on how the plan’s monitoring framework will interact with those developed by the UN Women for consideration by the UNSD is welcomed.

- Australia’s National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (the National Plan), is a long-term strategy to help support and bring about change for vulnerable women and their children. The National Plan has been well received both in Australia and internationally.

- The Global Plan notes the importance of gender and the value of improving health systems as a first point of contact for women experiencing violence – Australia can attest to this through the success and value of Domestic Violence-alert (DV-alert). DV-alert is Australia’s nationally accredited and nationally delivered training programme designed to help health, allied health and community frontline workers better understand and identify domestic and family violence and improve their referral and support skills.
• Australia's National Plan recognises that the health sector through doctors, nurses and specialist staff are often an early point of contact for women who have experienced sexual assault or domestic violence.

Australia also provides the following specific comments on the plan:

• Page 10, point 9 – there is an opportunity to specifically encourage women's voice in the community to be heard and support women's active participation in the community.
• Page 10, point 10 – there is an opportunity to include a focus on women's leadership within the health sector as a guiding principle.
• Page 17 – it may be beneficial to include an action on working in collaboration with UN partners to build on existing programs.
• Page 17, point 14 – a focus on secondary prevention may also be appropriately referenced here.
• Page 20, point 6 – this point should include reference to violence against women and violence against girls, not just for violence against children.