Memorandum

To: Redacted
From: Leigh Blomgren, Fellow, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice
CC: Sara Lulo, Executive Director, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice
     Elizabeth Brundige, Associate Director, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice
Date: December 8, 2011
Re: Gender-Based Violence in Africa

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN AFRICA

Violence against women and girls continues to be a global epidemic with physical, psychological, sexual and economical impacts. Violence against women is present in every country and across societies regardless of culture, class, education, income, religion, ethnicity and age. Additionally, gender-based violence is often sanctioned because of cultural practices and norms, and is further condoned by the lack of enforcement by the state and law-enforcement bodies.

Violence, and the fear of violence, severely limits women’s contribution to social and economic development. Rape and domestic violence account for 5-10% of healthy years lost by women.1

“Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women...”2

Certain community and societal-level risk factors are associated with higher or more severe rates of sexual and gender-based violence. The World Health Organization identifies the following evidence-supported factors:3

- Traditional gender norms that support male superiority and entitlement
- Social norms that tolerate or justify violence against women
- Weak community sanctions against perpetrators
- Poverty
- High levels of crime and conflict in society more generally

ISSUES

Domestic Violence, Intimate Partner Violence and Dating Violence

General

- Intimate partner violence is one of the most common forms of gender-based violence, yet it is also one of the most hidden and subject to the social and cultural norms operating within a particular society.4
- In Africa the data on the extent of domestic violence, and in particular intimate partner violence, is very limited due to under-reporting and the lack of protection offered by police and the justice system.
- Children in abusive households also suffer from the effects of violence, whether or not they are physically abused. Studies have shown that children who witness violence may experience many of the same emotional and behavioral problems that physically abused children experience, such as depression, aggression, disobedience, nightmares, physical health complaints and poor school performance.5

Domestic violence statistics are staggering on a country-by-country level:

- A South African study on intimate partner violence found that almost half of all women murdered were killed by their intimate partners, translating into a prevalence rate of 8.8 per 100,000 of the female population aged 14 years and older – the highest rate ever reported anywhere in the world.6
- In Zambia, 27% of ever-married women reported being beaten by their spouse/partner in the past year; this rate reaches 33% of 15-19 year-olds and 35% of 20-24 year-olds. 59% of Zambian women have ever experienced any violence by anyone since the age of 15 years.7
- In Kenya, 43% of 15-49 year old women reported having experienced some form of gender-based violence in their lifetime, with 29% reporting an experience in the previous year; 16% of women reported having ever been sexually abused, and for 13%, this had happened in the last year.8
- In Uganda, 41% of women reported being beaten or physically harmed by a partner; 41% of men reported beating their partner.9
- In Zimbabwe, 32% of 966 women in one province reported physical abuse by a family or household member since the age of 16.10
- In rural Ethiopia, 49% of ever-partnered women have ever experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, rising to 59% ever experiencing sexual violence.11
- In rural Tanzania, 47% of ever-partnered women have ever experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, while 31% have ever experienced sexual violence.12

6 World Health Organization, supra note 1.
9 World Health Organization, supra note 41.
10 Id.
11 Id.
Sexual Violence General

- Sexual Violence is one of the most pervasive types of gender-based violence in Africa, and comes in the form of:
  - Domestic violence, intimate partner violence and dating violence
  - Rape and sexual assault
  - Sexual exploitation
  - Conflict and post-conflict related violence (see below for more detail)
  - Female genital mutilation (see below for more detail)

- Female survivors of sexual violence not only sustain physical injuries, but are more likely than other women to have unintended pregnancies, report symptoms of reproductive tract infections, have multiple partners, and less likely to use condoms and other contraceptives.¹³

- The threat of social stigma prevents young women from speaking out about rape and abuse. Often rape cases are settled out of court because the perpetrator pays compensation to the woman’s family, or more often pays a bride price to authorities.

Youth and Sexual Violence

- Worldwide, 40-47% of sexual assaults are perpetrated against girls age 15 or younger.¹⁴

- There are increasing cases of forced sexual initiation, particularly among girls. Population-based surveys in South Africa recorded 28% of girls reporting forced sexual initiation. In provincial Tanzania and urban Namibia, 43% and 33% respectively of women reporting first sex before the age of 15 years described that experience as forced.¹⁵

- Sexual exploitation of young people is frequently facilitated by their lack of economic power and job opportunities. In Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, an estimated 30% (about 30,000) of prostitutes are women ranging from 12-26 years of age. The number of adolescent females engaged in informal prostitution may be far greater.¹⁶

Sexual Violence in Schools

Background

- Sexual violence against children is common and widespread in southern Africa, including Zambia.¹⁷ At schools in Zambia, young girls are under threat of various kinds of sexual abuse—including defilement,¹⁸ sexual harassment, rape, and sexual assault—by both teachers and male students. Some abuses are committed by teachers who offer children tutoring at the teachers’

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¹² Id.
¹⁸ Defilement, under Zambian law, involves sexual penetration of a girl under the age of 16 years.
homes in order to lure students into sexual activities,\textsuperscript{19} and the Zambian Government recently prohibited teachers from conducting private tutorials in their homes.\textsuperscript{20} According to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, “Surveys undertaken by civil society organizations revealed that sexual and physical forms of violence exist in schools and are mainly perpetrated against female pupils by male school staff and schoolboys.”\textsuperscript{21} The frequency of such abuse has sharply increased in recent years, raising concerns among parents and advocates, who have called for the government to act to protect girls in school from all forms of sexual abuse.\textsuperscript{22}

- Sexual violence has negative repercussions for pupils’ health, education, and social welfare. As well as causing physical injury or even death, sexual violence increases the risk of “sexual and reproductive health problems, with both immediate and long-term consequences.”\textsuperscript{23} In some cases, school girls who are subjected to sexual violence may be infected with HIV.\textsuperscript{24} Sexual violence can lead to unwanted and early pregnancy, as well as fetal death during pregnancy.\textsuperscript{25} It can also have a serious impact on the mental health of its victims,\textsuperscript{26} affect their social well-being, and prevent them from fully participating in their communities.\textsuperscript{27} In the consultations conducted for the UN Secretary General’s World Report on Violence Against Children, “[s]exual violence in school” was repeatedly reported as reason for “absenteeism, dropping out of school, and lack of motivation for academic achievement.”\textsuperscript{28} Although the government has instituted a reentry policy that requires schools to accept students who have given birth back into school, out of 15,000 school girls who were pregnant in 2009, approximately 9000 did not go back to school.\textsuperscript{29} In addition, victims who report sexual misconduct may experience hostility from abusive teachers or classmates who remain at the school, which affects the victims’ school performance.\textsuperscript{30}

Examples
Over 800 pupils attended a stakeholder workshop hosted in January 2011 by the Zambian Ministry of Education, and several of them spoke about cases of sexual violence that had occurred in their schools. For example:

- “An HIV/AIDS positive science teacher demanded sex with a pupil on exchange with good marks in class work and a Grade 12 examination leakage. The teacher infected the girl with HIV and

\textsuperscript{21} Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences, Rashida Manjoo, Addendum: Mission to Zambia, 2 May 2011, UN Doc. A/HRC/17/26/Add.4
\textsuperscript{23} Id.
\textsuperscript{24} UNESCO, Workshop on GBV Against Learners, January 2011, 8, 13, 15, 17 (on file with Avon Global Center).
\textsuperscript{29} UNESCO, Workshop on GBV Against Learners, January 2011, at 4 (on file with Avon Global Center).
the girl still failed the examination because she was given a false leakage. The girl has since died.”

- “One girl was asked to take books to the teacher’s house and upon arrival at the teacher’s house, the teacher started touching the girl’s bums. The girl got annoyed and slapped the teacher. She reported the abuse but the Head found no evidence.”
- “A pupil was raped at a school function by a teacher after noticing she was drunk. A gardener who was watching behind the scenes raped her as well and finally two fellow pupils took turns in raping the same girl. Nobody was punished in this case.”

Initiative

- The Avon Global Center has partnered with Women and Law in Southern Africa Research and Educational Trust (WLSA), a regional human rights organization based in Lusaka, Zambia, on a study of the problem of sexual violence in Zambian schools. In Spring 2011, students from the Cornell Law School International Human Rights Clinic conducted desk research on the international and regional human rights laws that requires states to protect girls from sexual violence in schools. They also reviewed Zambian law and researched the problem of sexual violence in Zambian schools, the government’s response to it, and its effects on girls’ health and education. A team of students and the Center’s Associate Director travelled to Zambia in Fall 2011 to conduct field research and interviews of stakeholders such as teachers and school officials, as well as representatives of advocacy organizations, police, lawyers, magistrates, and officials in the Ministry of Education. The desk and field research will provide the basis for an action-oriented human rights report that the Avon Global Center, the International Human Rights Clinic, and WLSA plan to release in Fall 2012.

Health/HIV AIDS

- The impact of sexual and gender-based violence resonates in all areas of health and social programming: survivors of sexual violence experience increased rates of morbidity and mortality, and violence has been shown to exacerbate HIV transmission, among other health conditions.
- Exposure to gender-based violence and sexual coercion significantly increases girls’ and women’s chances of early sexual debut, experiencing forced sex, engaging in transactional sex, and non-use of condoms.
- Social, economic, and gender issues are increasingly recognized as significant factors in countries of east and southern Africa that underlie the HIV epidemic, keep maternal mortality and fertility rates high, and increase the likelihood that sex will not be safe, voluntary, or pleasurable.
- In Northern Uganda’s Pader district, where 300 of the 412 gender-based violence cases reported last year dealt with rape, survivors are unable to access PEP, not because it is unavailable, but due to lack of qualified medical personnel to administer the therapy.
- There is a significant link between intimate partner violence and HIV/AIDS, which has enormous social and economic implications, including reduced economic activity, disintegration of families

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33 Id.
34 Id.
35 Id.
and weakened social cohesion. Studies carried out in Tanzania, Kenya and South Africa found that HIV positive women were more likely to report having experienced intimate partner violence.36

**Conflict and Post-Conflict Related Violence against Women and Girls** (NB: Also the topic of the Avon Global Center 2010 conference and the Cornell International Law Review being mailed to you)

**General**

- Gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict areas is a major international problem. Throughout the world, women experience gender-targeted violence, such as rape, sexual slavery, and a host of other human rights abuses, as a part of military campaigns and as a result of the breakdown of community norms which tend to accompany armed conflicts. They experience violence at the hands of government actors, non-state militaries (including rebel forces and dissidents), community members, and even, tragically, the peace-keeping forces that are sent to protect and restore order.37
- Women in conflict areas remain vulnerable to violence following an armed conflict, as research indicates a strong rise in domestic violence, sex trafficking, and forced prostitution in post-conflict areas.38
- In addition, rape in refugee camps is commonplace and exacerbated by low security, lack of order, and lack of basic necessities such as electric and light.

**Rape as an Act of Genocide**

- In armed conflicts, sexual violence is used as a weapon of war by rebel forces, to dishonor the woman and the enemy, and to strategically institute a reign of fear in order to seize control.
- Genocide is an act committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group (i.e. altering the racial composition of a population in order to curb or wipe it out altogether), for example, in Rwanda when Hutu men raped hundreds of thousands of Tutsi women. Rape as genocide is not, however, limited to the continent of Africa, for example, this was also common in the Former Yugoslavia.
- While international criminal tribunals have started to recognize sexual violence and rape as crimes against humanity and war crimes, offenses are rarely prosecuted and there is a general culture of impunity at both domestic and international levels.
- Historically, rape and sexual violence have been largely ignored by the international community. Violence against women in times of conflict, in particular, has been viewed as a natural consequence of war, and rape has been viewed as commonplace during war as a method of satisfying troops.39 Women were traditionally regarded as spoils of war, seen as property which men could conquer.40

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40 Id.
Recently, however, rape and sexual violence have been acknowledged as offenses within international criminal law.

Example: Rape in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

- More than a decade ago the genocide that claimed nearly a million lives in neighboring Rwanda spilled over into Congo. Since then, the Congolese army, foreign-backed rebels, and home-grown militias have been fighting each other over power and this land, which has some of the world's biggest deposits of gold, copper, diamonds, and tin. Each new battle is followed by pillaging and rape; entire communities are terrorized. Forced to flee their homes, people take whatever they can, and walk for miles in the desperate hope of finding food and shelter. Over the last year, more than 500,000 people have been uprooted. A fraction of them make it to cramped camps, where they depend on UN aid to survive.\(^41\)

- The situation in the Congo is so grave in terms of sexual violence that it is commonly said that "it is safer to be a man on the frontline of the battlefield than to be a woman at home."

- In the war-torn regions of Democratic Republic of Congo, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of women have been raped or severely maimed. These figures are among the highest in the world.\(^42\)

- In some villages in the Congo, as many as 90% of the women have been raped; men in the villages are usually unarmed, and incapable of fighting back in defense of wives, daughters, sisters, and even mothers, and are often forced to watch as their loved ones are gang-raped.\(^43\)

- **SURVIVOR STORY**: In an isolated village in the mountains in eastern Congo called Walungu, 24-year-old Lucienne M'Maroyhi was at home one night with her two children and her younger brother, when six soldiers broke in. They tied her up and began to rape her, one by one. "I was lying on the ground, and they gave a flashlight to my younger brother so that he could see them raping me," she recalls. "They raped me like they were animals, one after another. When the first one finished, they washed me out with water, told me to stand up, so the next man could rape me." She was convinced they'd kill her, just as soldiers had murdered her parents the year before. Instead, they turned to her brother. "They wanted him to rape me but he refused, and told them, 'I cannot do such a thing. I cannot rape my sister.' So they took out their knives and stabbed him to death in front of me," she recalls. Lucienne was then dragged through the forest to the soldier's camp. She was forced to become their slave and was raped every day for eight months. All the while, she had no idea where her children were. Finally, Lucienne escaped. Back in her village, she found her two little girls were alive. But she also learned that she was pregnant. She was carrying the child of one of her rapists. Lucienne's husband abandoned her. Sadly, this story is not at all unique this very day in the Congo.\(^44\)

Fistulas

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\(^{41}\) CBS, “War Against Women” This segment was originally broadcast on Jan. 13, 2008. It was updated on Aug. 14, 2008.


\(^{43}\) CBS, *supra* note 41.

\(^{44}\) *Id.*
• Fistulas are a kind of damage that is seldom seen in the developed world: a rupture of the walls that separate the vagina and bladder or rectum. They are a major health concern in many parts of Africa.

• Ordinary rapes, even violent ones, do not usually cause fistulas, although it is not medically impossible. Doctors in eastern Congo say they have seen cases that resulted from gang rapes where large numbers of militiamen repeatedly forced themselves on the victim. But more often the damage is caused by the deliberate introduction of objects into the victim's vagina when the rape itself is over. The objects might be sticks or pipes. Or gun barrels. In many cases the attackers shoot the victim in the vagina at point-blank range after they have finished raping her.45

• In eastern Congo, the problem is practically an epidemic. Thousands of women had been raped so brutally that they had fistulas. They wandered into hospitals soaked in their own urine and feces, rendered incontinent by their injuries.46

• The only hope for these women is a difficult operation. It usually takes several hours, followed by a recovery period of two or three months. Even then, the doctors may have to try again. Sometimes the surgeons never manage to restore the patient's continence.47

• MODERN DAY HERO AND INNOVATOR: Dr. Denis Mukwege & the Panzi Hospital (NB: Dr. Mukwege spoke at the Avon Global Center 2010 Conference)
  o Esteemed Congolese gynecologist, Dr. Denis Mukwege, works in treating and advocating for the victims of sexual violence and war crimes in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Panzi Hospital in Bukavu was founded by him to offer comprehensive care for women victims of sexual violence. The hospital specializes in fistula surgery and the treatment of rape victims.48
  o Panzi is running at capacity, with 250 to 300 admissions a month due to rapes, most of them new cases.49
  o Till date, Dr. Mukwege and his team have treated more than 30,000 victims of sexual violence.50
  o The youngest victim of fistula from rape his hospital has seen was 12 months old; the oldest, 71.51
  o When attackers shoot their victims in the vagina, Dr. Mukwege says, "they'll do this carefully to make sure the woman does not die. The perpetrators are trying to make the damage as bad as they can, to use it as a kind of weapon of war, a kind of terrorism." Instead of just killing the woman, she goes back to her village permanently and obviously marked. "I think it's a strategy put in place by these groups to disrupt society, to make husbands flee, to terrorize."52
  o SURVIVOR STORY: Last April, Dr. Mukwege says, a 5-year-old girl was brought to him. Her tormentors had raped her and then fired a pistol into her vagina. She was operated on twice at Panzi Hospital without success before being sent to a hospital in the

46 Id.
47 Id.
48 http://www.kbs-frb.org/pressitem.aspx?id=280888&LangType=1033
49 The Daily Beast, supra note 45.
50 Supra note 48.
51 The Daily Beast, supra note 45.
52 Id.
United States where surgeons tried twice more to repair the damage. They failed, too. She'll spend the rest of her life with a colostomy bag.\(^{53}\)

- Dr. Mukwege’s innovation not only underscores the pervasive nature of gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict areas, but also the importance of engaging men as gender-sensitive male allies to combat the violence and to help break down cultural norms and practices that suppress women’s rights.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), also known as Female Genital Cutting or Female Circumcision**

- FGM takes place in over 28 countries in AFRICA (both eastern and western).
- Estimates suggest that between 85 and 114 million girls have been subjected to FGM. The practice varies from cutting the external genital area to closing the genital area leaving a small opening for passage of urine and menstrual flow. As populations grow, the number of girls undergoing the procedure is increasing by about 2 million per year.\(^{54}\)
- FGM has severe and lifelong health consequences for girls. In Sudan, doctors estimate that 10 to 30% of young girls die from it, especially in areas where antibiotics are not available. Medical complications of FGM include pain, prolonged bleeding, hemorrhaging, urinary retention, infections, obstetric complications, and psychological trauma.\(^{55}\)
- Few laws protect young women from FGM. In Anglophone African nations where genital cutting is prevalent, only Ghana has passed specific laws opposing its practice.\(^{56}\)
- **SURVIVOR STORY**: Kakenya Ntaiya knows what it takes for a woman to get ahead in Africa, and the price is often steep. She was engaged at the age of 5 and destined for ritual circumcision and early marriage in Kenya. She made a deal with her father: She would endure the surgery if he let her finish high school. Later she negotiated another deal with her village elders to leave her Maasai village and go to college in the U.S. Now 32, Ntaiya has opened the Kakenya Center for Excellence, a girl’s school in her village that has seen enrollment more than double since it opened in 2009 with 32 girls. “Genital mutilation, for example, is not just a medical problem but a legal problem.” Her father abused her mother, said Ntaiya “but my mother was very inspirational to me” and supported her in her dream to become a teacher. Her dream came at the price of circumcision, but now that she is familiar with Kenyan laws, she is in a position to help others who were not as fortunate as herself or her mother. One of her students recently told a teacher she didn’t want to be cut, but that her parents were preparing for the ritual. Understanding their legal recourse and their need as a school to follow the law (in Kenya ritual circumcision of girls is outlawed), Ntaiya’s school got the ministry of education and the village chief to intervene and stop the procedure.

**SOLUTIONS & INNOVATIONS ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN AFRICA**

**Home-Grown Innovations to Addressing GBV in Africa**


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\(^{53}\) Id.

\(^{54}\) Toubia N. Female genital mutilation and the responsibility of reproductive health professionals. *Int J Gynaecol Obstet* 2004; 46:127-135.

\(^{55}\) Id.

\(^{56}\) Id.
- FIDA-Kenya is a women lawyers’ organization established in 1985 after the UN Third World Women Conference held in Nairobi. It is the oldest women rights organization in Eastern Africa.
- Over the years FIDA-Kenya has curved a niche for itself as a fearless defender of women’s human rights at the national, regional and international level.
  - At the local level FIDA-Kenya is connected to the indigent woman through its legal aid clinics and community action groups empowered to grass ‘root’ women rights at the municipal levels.
  - At the national level, FIDA is connected horizontally with like-minded players from whom it shares practices and innovations and vertically with strategic institutions of government through which it exerts policy and practice influence.
  - Internationally, FIDA-Kenya is recognized as a foremost African actor in the area of women empowerment.
- Key Achievements
  - In 2005 FIDA Kenya spearheaded the establishment of the Family Division of the High Court.
  - FIDA Kenya was instrumental in the establishment of the National Commission on Gender and Development.
  - FIDA Kenya was involved in the development and drafting of various gender friendly laws and policies such as:
    - Employment Act
    - Trafficking Bill
    - Gender and Development Policy
    - The Land Policy
  - FIDA Kenya has been identified a model organization in the provision of legal aid and is therefore a pilot site for the Kenya National Legal Aid and Awareness Programme (NALEAP).

Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) [http://www.creawkenya.org/]
- CREA is a non-governmental, non-partisan organization based in Nairobi, Kenya. The organization was set up in 1998 by several women lawyers who had common goals and purpose: a commitment to confront the low awareness of women's real needs and rights in society.
- Since Sexual and Gender-based Violence is culturally accepted in Kenya, CREA is committed to transforming society and achieving for women, a just and dignified environment, in which their relation with men is equal, and their rights and freedoms are respected and realized. CREA’s programs, which are politically non-partisan, mostly anchor on enthusiastic lobby and advocacy activities that support the interests of our constituency, the women of Kenya.

Leymah Gbowee – 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Winner
- Leymah Gbowee, who organized a group of Christian and Muslim women to challenge Liberia's warlords, was honored for mobilizing women "across ethnic and religious dividing lines to bring an end to the long war in Liberia, and to ensure women's participation in elections."
• Gbowee has long campaigned for the rights of women and against rape. In 2003, she led hundreds of female protesters through Monrovia to demand swift disarmament of fighters who preyed on women throughout Liberia during 14 years of near-constant civil war.
• In 2009, she won a Profile in Courage Award, an honor named for a 1957 Pulitzer Prize-winning book written by John F. Kennedy, for her work in emboldening women in Liberia.
• Gbowee works in Ghana's capital as the director of Women Peace and Security Network Africa. The group's website says she also won a 2007 Blue Ribbon Award from Harvard University and was the central character of an award-winning documentary called "Pray the Devil Back to Hell."

International Partners Addressing GBV in Africa

Women in the World http://womenintheworld.org/

• The Women in the World Foundation was born out of Newsweek & The Daily Beast’s Women in the World summit, launched by the publications’ editor-in-chief, Tina Brown, in March 2010. The summit brings together extraordinary women leaders and advocates from around the world to find solutions to the challenges facing women and girls, from sex trafficking to the need for more women in the boardroom. It also showcases remarkable stories of everyday pioneers. In the year and a half since the first summit, participants have reached out to Newsweek & The Daily Beast in droves, wondering how they can get involved; how they can be part of the solution. Enter the Women in the World Foundation.

• The Women in the World Foundation, led by Kim K. Azzarelli, also the founder of the Cornell Law School Avon Global Center for Women and Justice, is a powerful new initiative dedicated to highlighting and driving solutions for advancing women and girls. Building on the success of the Women in the World summits and harnessing the journalistic power of Newsweek & The Daily Beast, the Foundation will serve as a resource to all who seek to learn about and engage on the issues facing women and girls. The Foundation will, in addition, convene courageous women of impact, provide strategic grants to select non-profit organizations, and foster much-needed collaboration between organizations.

Cornell Law School Avon Global Center for Women and Justice http://womenandjustice.org

• In March 2008, over seventy judges and legal professionals from all over the world met at the U.S. State Department for the Senior Roundtable for Women’s Justice in Washington, D.C. to explore ways to eradicate violence against women and improve women's access to justice. At the Senior Roundtable, these judges exchanged ideas on how to overcome these barriers and identified the need for a forum to continue their dialogue and translate their suggestions into on-the-ground projects.

• With a generous grant from the Avon Foundation, Cornell Law School established the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice. The Center's mission is to work with judges, legal professionals, governmental and non-governmental organizations to improve access to justice in an effort to eliminate violence against women and girls.

• The Center is unique because it incorporates the perspective and experiences of judges, particularly women judges, in designing its projects. The Center promotes the implementation of existing international human rights laws and national protections aimed at eradicating violence against women by providing free legal research support to judges around the world and by providing online access to case law from around the world that otherwise may be difficult for judges and advocates to access, let alone freely.

• The Avon Global Center for Women and Justice undertakes four major initiatives in furtherance of its mission:
Clinical Projects: The Center undertakes projects developed with judges, legal professionals, and organizations to improve access to justice for survivors of gender-based violence. Projects may include designing training programs, investigating and reporting on relevant issues, and promoting effective implementation of laws relating to gender-based violence. (NB: for example, the Acid Violence Report being mailed to you)

Legal Research Support for Judges: The Center promotes the implementation of international and domestic laws relating to gender-based violence by providing judges throughout the world with legal research support on these issues.

Online Legal Resources: The Center's website provides an online library of legal resources, such as international laws, domestic laws, articles and reports on gender-based violence.

Conferences and Events: The Center hosts an annual women and justice conference and other events for judges, legal professionals and advocates. These events are an opportunity to, among other things, exchange ideas and best practices for securing justice for survivors of gender-based violence.


- The Virtue Foundation mission is to increase awareness, inspire action and render assistance through healthcare, education and empowerment initiatives.
- Virtue Foundation seeks to provide both short-term impactful and long-term sustainable development solutions to communities across the globe.
- Virtue's innovative model of sustainable development includes the guiding principle of investing in local women leaders and judges as agents of change to sponsor development projects.
  - Example: Virtue is currently working with Chief Justice Georgina Wood to establish Ghana’s first-ever family justice center – a true innovation to make justice more accessible to Ghanaian women.

(NB: On the topic of the importance of women judges, see also: Cornell International Law Review article on “Sustainable Development, Rule of Law, and the Impact of Women Judges” by Justice Sandra Day O’Connor and Kim Azzarelli)
* A general resource you might find useful or interesting

**The Cycle of Gender-Based Abuse**

Women experience violence at every stage of life, and for one reason: they are a woman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Type of Violence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prenatal</td>
<td>Prenatal sex selection, battering during pregnancy, coerced pregnancy (rape during war)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infancy</td>
<td>Female infanticide, emotional and physical abuse, differential access to food and medical care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood</td>
<td>Genital cutting; incest and sexual abuse; differential access to food, medical care, and education; child prostitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>Dating and courtship violence, economically coerced sex, sexual abuse in the workplace, rape, sexual harassment, forced prostitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproductive</td>
<td>Abuse of women by intimate partners, marital rape, dowry abuse and murders, partner homicide, psychological abuse, sexual abuse in the workplace, sexual harassment, rape, abuse of women with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Age</td>
<td>Abuse of widows, elder abuse (which affects mostly women)</td>
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</table>