



Justice Standing Committee Mandate

The **Justice Committee** is one of four OCTEVAW standing committees through which the Coalition works to achieve its goal of ending violence against women and, through leadership, education, advocacy and political action, of promoting a coordinated response to women and their children who have experienced abuse. All Standing Committees report to the OCTEVAW Steering Committee through their chair, who represents them as a member of the Steering Committee. All OCTEVAW members are encouraged to participate not only on committees of particular interest to them, or to which they bring pertinent skills, but on every committee, on a rotating basis.

The **Justice Committee** is dedicated to the principle that its work must encompass all forms of VAW, as defined in the OCTEVAW Constitution, and embrace women in all their diversity. The Committee serves as a forum for service providers, both community-based and institutional, who interact with women victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence, and/or their children who witness abuse. These efforts must align with, and support the aims of the Coalition and correspond to the priorities of the membership. The committee members acknowledge the inter-relationship of the work and priorities of all OCTEVAW committees and of the Coalition.

Like other standing committees, the **Justice Committee** is dedicated to the principle that its work must encompass all forms of violence against women, as defined by the OCTEVAW Constitution, and embrace women in all their diversity.

The committee is a forum for its members to:

- Ensure a coordinated response by the justice system to women victims of abuse and their children
- Ensure the safety of women who have been sexually assaulted or abused, and of their children who may have experienced or witnessed the abuse
- Ensure their legal needs are met, whatever areas of the law their case involves (criminal justice, family law, immigration, etc.)

This is accomplished by:

- identifying issues and systemic problems and developing strategic priorities, in harmony with OCTEVAW's strategic plan
- developing an annual work plan, including timelines and costs, for the approval of the Steering Committee
- regular meetings with focused, issue-based agendas



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- working in partnership with all sectors (see list under “membership of the committee,” below) in a spirit of mutual understanding of roles
 - monitoring compliance with existing policies and protocols by the police, the courts and others who deal with women victims of abuse or assault and their children
 - monitoring the judicial process by establishing a presence in the courtroom
 - working toward the goal that women with diverse experiences and cultural backgrounds are treated equitably by the justice system
 - regularly reviewing data on frequency of charging, withdrawals and releases to detect changing patterns

 - encouraging university students to pursue research and data collection to support proposals for improvements to the system
 - developing and strengthening resources that support women as witnesses in the judicial process
 - identifying and correcting misconceptions about women victims and their children that undermine their right to be treated equitably and with dignity in their interactions with the justice system

Membership of the Committee:

- is open to OCTEVAW members involved in, interacting with or concerned about programs within the justice, policing and corrections systems
- should always contain a minimum of two community members