



**Commemoration of the
International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**

24 November 2021 10.00-11.30am

Virtual event (Zoom platform)

Context

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is the most pervasive violation of human rights globally. According to the latest estimates, nearly 1 in 3 women aged 15 years and older, around the world have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner, non-partner sexual violence or both at least once in their lifetime, indicating that levels of VAWG have remained largely unchanged over the last decade.¹ These numbers do not reflect the impact of COVID-19 and would be even higher if they included the full continuum of violence that affects women and girls including sexual harassment, violence in digital contexts, harmful practices and sexual exploitation across different contexts, geographic locations, in public and private settings, in contexts of peace or in contexts of conflict as well as in humanitarian or crisis settings with a disproportionate impact on the most marginalized women and girls.

However, VAWG is neither natural nor inevitable. It can and must be prevented and there is a growing body of evidence and practice demonstrating that it is possible to prevent and reduce VAWG through comprehensive, inclusive strategies and interventions that tackle the root causes, transform harmful social norms, and empower women and girls including through survivor-centred essential services across policing, justice, health and social sectors.

In this context, the UNiTE campaign under its 2021 theme ***“Orange the World: END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN NOW!”*** will commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of VAWG by highlighting the universal nature of VAWG and acknowledging the particular challenges related to COVID-19, humanitarian and conflict situations as well as celebrating the success stories, showcasing the groundbreaking and transformative work that is being carried out despite the impact of the pandemic and often in highly complex humanitarian settings around the world, to show that VAWG can be prevented and inspire scale up and greater investments in the proven solutions.

Objectives of the Event

The commemoration of *the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*” will have the following objectives:

1. Highlight the pervasive nature of VAWG across all countries and regions around the world in contexts of peace and conflict, in humanitarian and crises settings as well as in development settings and in the developed world.
2. Remind the world that violence against women is neither natural, nor inevitable and can be prevented and showcase success stories to inspire all actors to scale up what works.

¹ World Health Organization, on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Violence Against Women Estimation and Data (VAW-IAWGED), Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018 (Geneva, 2021).



3. Build on the momentum created by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action during the Generation Equality Forum, reemphasize commitments, amplification of the specific actions outlined in the GBV Action Coalition and promote further action to deliver progress toward the SDGs through the [Gender-Based Violence Action Coalition Blueprint](#).
4. Call for greater investment in long-term, comprehensive, and inclusive approaches that can be adapted to rapidly changing contexts such as the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative.
5. Honor women's rights organizations, feminist, youth and girl led organizations and acknowledge their crucial leadership role in EVAW.
6. Activate UN system wide social mobilization under the umbrella of **"Orange the World: END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN NOW!"** and inspire further action across all spheres of society everywhere.

Participants and audience

The *Official Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women* will be a multi-stakeholder event with the participation of high-level representatives of Member States, women's civil society organizations, United Nations agencies, the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences, Leaders and/or Commitment Makers of the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence and Goodwill Ambassadors. The Secretary-General would address the event at the opening followed by the Executive Director of UN Women.

Format

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 working modalities, the event will be prerecorded and broadcast live through Zoom and on UN Women's YouTube channel. The event will be hosted by a youth leader and will consist of two segments:

Segment 1 will consist of opening remarks from the Secretary General followed by interventions aligned with the key messages of the 2021 [UNiTE campaign](#)² by UN Women's Executive Director, the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences and Leaders and Commitment Makers from the Action Coalition on GBV including youth leaders and civil society/women's rights organizations. The Center for Women's Global Leadership will also be invited to make a statement to commemorate the 30-year anniversary of the 16 days of activism.

Segment 2 will consist of inspiring success stories of initiatives that have demonstrated impact in reducing or eliminating violence against women and girls from around the world including through the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative. The interventions and success stories that are presented in this segment will be aligned to the four actions of the [blueprint](#) of the Action Coalition on GBV: (1) Creating enabling policy, legal and resource environments; (2) Scaling up evidencedriven prevention programming; (3) Scaling up comprehensive, accessible and quality services for survivors; and (4) Enabling and empowering autonomous girl-led and women's rights organizations to exercise their expertise. Representatives from UN agencies will also be invited to make statements in support of the GEF and the Action Coalitions Global Acceleration Plan.

Accessibility will be ensured through interpretation and closed caption in six United Nations languages. The event's safety will be maximized through a digital registration process.

² Please see UNiTE campaign concept note here: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action/16-days-of-activism>