



Gender-Based Violence in a COVID-19 Context Activating Collective Responses, Innovative Partnerships and Proven Policies

High-level side-event on the margins of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly
29 September 2020, 09.30 AM – 11.45 AM EST

Background

2020 marks a milestone moment for the gender equality agenda. It is the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of its landmark outcome, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Important gains for women and girls have been made since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration, however global progress has stalled and not a single country today can claim to have achieved gender equality.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created even more obstacles on the path to gender equality and exacerbated pre-existing inequalities. An increased report of gender-based violence, especially domestic violence, has been noted, as high as a 40% increase in some countries. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, this rate is likely to grow with multiple impacts on women's wellbeing, their sexual and reproductive health, their mental health, and their ability to participate and lead in the recovery of our societies and economy. The most vulnerable and marginalized women are the most impacted. If not dealt with, this "shadow pandemic" will exacerbate other impacts of COVID-19.

In April 2020, the UN Secretary-General called for an end to all violence 'from war zones to peoples' homes', urging all governments to make prevention and redress of gender-based violence a key part of national response plans for COVID-19.¹ 146 Member States and Observers positively responded to this call to action. Many countries have strengthened actions and resources to address violence against women as part of the response to COVID-19. As the world continues to grasp with the impact of the pandemic, the UN system led by the Secretary-General is redoubling its effort to address gender-based violence through **dedicated political engagement and partnerships**, especially with civil society.

In addition, UN Women has launched an **Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence** in the context of the Generation Equality Forum. The Action Coalition is a global, innovative, multi-stakeholder platform to drive commitments, concrete actions and financing over the next five years in support of gender equality during the UN Decade of Action (2020-2030). As a multi-stakeholder platform, the GBV Action Coalition has a strong structure of fifteen leaders from Member States, civil society, the private sector, philanthropies and international organizations.

Finally, as an immediate response to the crisis, **the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women** has actioned a [5-point action plan](#) to provide immediate support to grantees during the crisis. [In partnership with the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, the UN Trust Fund allocated an additional US\\$9 million](#) for immediate

¹ See: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061052>

support to all its grantees in Sub-Saharan Africa. Up to 44 civil society organizations were eligible to receive financial assistance, with a primary focus on institutional strengthening, risk mitigation and survivor recovery in the context of COVID-19. The UN Trust Fund will launch on the day of event, with a minimum envelope of US\$11 million.

Objectives

The event will have the following objectives:

- Highlight progress and good practices on tackling gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19
- Accelerate concrete policy response to gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19
- Promote zero tolerance of gender-based violence across all spheres of society everywhere
- Introduce the GBV Action Coalition as a multi-stakeholder platform to drive progress and accountability
- Raise the level of ambition for concrete commitments on addressing gender-based violence ahead of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on Beijing +25

Audience

The event will be a multi-stakeholder event, inclusive of different voices and experiences, including high-level government officials, youth and women's rights organizations representatives. Member States, leaders of the six Action Coalitions, the United Nations Trust Fund's grantees, UN agencies, youth-led organizations, civil society organizations, international organizations and the private sector will be invited to participate in the event, which will also be broadcast live for the general public.

Format

The high-level event on Gender-Based Violence will be held as a virtual meeting.

It will include three main segments:

- Opening and setting the stage on gender-based violence and COVID-19
- Action Coalition Leadership statement
- High-level round tables and fire-side chats

Accessibility will be ensured through interpretation and captions in the five United Nations languages as well as a digital support to all participants. The event's safety will be maximized through a closed digital registration process.

For more information, please contact executiveoffice@unwomen.org