

United Nations Secretary-General's Campaign UNITE by 2030 to End Violence against Women

ACTION CIRCULAR: February/March 2021 Theme: FUND!

ORANGE DAY

The United Nations Secretary-General's Campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women has proclaimed the 25th of each month as "Orange Day," a day to raise awareness and take action to end violence against women and girls.

As a bright and optimistic colour, orange represents a future free from violence against women and girls, for the UNITE Campaign.

Orange Day calls upon activists, governments, and UN partners to mobilize people and highlight issues relevant to preventing and ending violence against women and girls, not only once a year, on 25 November (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women), but every month.

1. BACKGROUND

Violence against women and girls (VAWG), and particularly domestic violence, has dramatically escalated around the world in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. As many countries went into lockdown, access to services and justice for survivors of violence, as well as prevention efforts, were severely curtailed. Current estimates indicate that for every 3 months the lockdown continues, an additional 15 million women are expected to be affected by violence. ¹The global cost of violence against women is estimated at approximately 2 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP), or US\$1.5 trillion.²

In April 2020, the <u>United Nations Secretary-General urged all</u> <u>governments</u> ³to make the prevention and redress of violence against women and girls a key part of their national response plans for COVID- 19. The appeal was answered in a <u>statement</u> <u>by 146 Member States and Observers</u> who expressed strong support.

As a follow up to the Secretary-General's call, the Secretary-General's Executive Committee also adopted a *"Political Engagement Strategy"* for the entire UN system to mobilize commitments and action to end gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19.

¹ <u>UNFPA Technical Note "Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on family planning and ending gender-based violence, female genital mutilation and child</u> <u>marriage</u> – 27 April 2020.

² <u>United Nations Policy Brief: "The Impact of COVID-19 on Women</u>" – 9 April 2020.

³ <u>Report of the Secretary-General "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls"</u> – 30 July 2020

The efforts will aim to:

- ✓ Accelerate concrete policy response to gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19; and
- ✓ Promote zero tolerance of gender-based violence across all spheres of society everywhere.

All Governments are called to make commitments and undertake policy actions around 4 key action areas⁴:

FUND

- PREVENT
- RESPOND
- COLLECT

As we approach the <u>65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women</u> (15 to 26 March 2021) which will be held under the priority theme "*Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls*", the UNITE Campaign will be focusing its advocacy on the first action area of the Political Engagement Strategy:

- Prioritize funding for a minimum package of essential services that include GBV prevention in COVID-19 fiscal stimulus packages, and within the UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan⁵,
- Make flexible funding available for women's rights organizations working at the nexus of COVID-19 and gender-based violence.

2. MAIN PRINCIPLES OF UNITE CAMPAIGN ADVOCACY

- Honour and acknowledge women's movements and their leadership in preventing and ending violence against women and girls.
- **'Leave No One Behind'**: Apply a human rights-based approach and focus attention on the most underserved and disadvantaged groups of women and girls in efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls.
- **Survivor-centred:** Take a respectful and 'do no harm' approach to the telling and retelling of survivor stories, only with their informed consent and under conditions in which they have agreed. This and the empowerment principles are vital for the engagement of survivor advocates/activists on their own terms. All UNITE partners must ensure that survivor advocates rights, safety, dignity and confidentiality are prioritized and upheld.
- Multi-sectoral: Everyone in society has an important role to play in ending violence against women and girls and we all must work together across sectors to address the various aspects of violence against women and girls.
- **Transformative**: Fostering critical examination of gender roles, regimes and practices, while seeking to create or strengthen equitable gender norms and dynamics for fundamental, lasting changes for women and girls.
- Elevate the voices of young feminists: While the world's reviewing progress made over the past 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, it is time to create platforms to elevate voices of the next generation feminists who are shaping their future now.
- The colour orange continues to be a key tool unifying all activities to bring global attention to the initiative.

⁵ <u>Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19</u> – April-December 2020

⁴ This call to action was developed from the <u>(UN Inter-Agency Statement on Violence Against Women and Girls in the context of COVID-19"</u>.

3. RELEVANT FUNDS and PROGRAMMES

<u>COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund</u>

COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund was created at WHO's request by UN Foundation in partnership with the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation. The Fund allows individuals, companies, and organizations all over the world to directly contribute to WHO's global work to help countries prevent, detect and respond to the pandemic. As of 12th February 2021, the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund has raised or committed \$242,430,252 from more than 660,000 individuals, companies and philanthropies.

UNTF to End Violence against Women

Violence against women and girls surged alarmingly as COVID-19 spread and governments introduced lockdown measures to contain it. This was the <u>initial assessment</u> of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund), based on the responses of 144 civil society organizations (CSOs) operating in 69 countries and territories worldwide. Published six months into the crisis, the UN Trust Fund's <u>second assessment</u> showed that the continued economic insecurity and movement restrictions are still driving increased violence against women and girls.

Overall, the majority of UN Trust Fund-funded CSOs are concerned about their operational survival in the face of a global emergency diverting funding from VAW/G-related services. CSOs need urgent funding to improve organizational resilience to the crisis, from upgrading information and communication technology (ICT) to work online, to improved health and safety measures in offices.

In this context, the UN Trust Fund is rapidly adjusting its operations and strategies to respond to the urgent needs of its grantees. With thanks to the support of current donors, in September 2020, the UN Trust Fund launched a new Call for Proposals seeking applications from front line CSOs/WROs that are responding to the rise of violence against women and girls and the increased needs for multisectoral essential services in the context of the pandemic. As a result, the UN Trust Fund received 1,498 applications from 110 countries and territories for a total value of almost \$759 million, showing the scope of the demand.



Simultaneously, grantees are also sharing what is needed, and how donors can support their work to address violence against women and girls. Among them, the Integrated Disabled Women Activities (IDIWA), a women-led organization in **Uganda**, is leading a project to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities. Executive Director Elizabeth Kayanga shared their perspective:

"Donors need to strengthen the capacity and create space for women's rights organizations, [especially] organizations of young people and women facing intersecting forms of discrimination [as] social movement requires collective power beyond a small group to build and sustain a long-term change."

Partner Highlights

Investing in women's movements for the empowerment of civil society and women's rights organizations is one of the main goals of the multi-year EU/UN Spotlight Initiative's Outcome 6 that the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) is entrusted to help realize.⁶

In 2020, civil society and women's rights organizations are responding to unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis, including a sharp rise in the "silent pandemic" of violence against women and girls. Their experiences prompted the Spotlight Initiative to allocate an additional <u>USD 9 million</u> to immediately support all existing UN Trust Fund grantees in **sub-Saharan Africa**, some with an extension of project duration. With this timely aid, UN Trust Fund grantees are:⁷

- investing in help centers so women at risk of violence and survivors can secure temporary shelter,
- <u>establishing a women's taskforce</u> to ensure inclusion of women survivors' needs in COVID-19 response and recovery plans; and
- <u>strengthening outreach efforts</u> on ending FGM/C, which is on the rise, through online, TV and radio messaging to reach women and girls.

Gertrude Shumba, Executive Director of Family AIDS Caring Trust (FACT), a UN Trust Fund grantee under the Spotlight Initiative that works with self-identified female sex workers and young women in **Zimbabwe**, explained the importance of this approach:

"This investment entails employing more **long-term funding strategies** [because] before real change can be realized, long-term funding is needed to allow community movements to become established."

One of 35 organizations awarded grants by the UN Trust Fund under the Spotlight Initiative in 2019, the Public Interest Law Center (PILC) in **Chad** is leading the project "Violence against Women and Girls in Chad: Prevention and Care."⁸ The project aims to eradicate harmful social norms, customs and practices, and improve access to legal and psychosocial services for women survivors of violence, including women in detention, domestic workers and survivors of sexual exploitation. As COVID-19 has spread, women and girls in Chad have felt the impact. The pandemic has significantly affected PILC's work, such as preventing visits to communities and forcing it to reallocate its resources.⁹

Delphine Djiraibe, PILC's Senior Advocate said "This pandemic casts a shadow on the issue of violence against women and girls in our communities [...] Women and girls suffer [from] impunity and utter indifference" and explained that as support systems and resources have been diverted to the health crisis, insufficient attention is being paid to the rampant violence.

The organization is one of 44 existing UN Trust Fund grantees in Sub-Saharan Africa receiving additional institutional strengthening support under the Spotlight Initiative-funded projects. With the **new funding**, PILC is planning to: improve their organization's capacity and facilities to ensure staff's well-being and can work remotely; invest in help centers so that women survivors and at risk of violence can seek temporary shelter; provide sanitary kits and ration bags; and offer medical and psychological assistance.

These supplementary resources are vital to ensure that local women's rights organizations can continue their lifesaving work in these challenging times.

- ⁸ In French: "Violences faites aux femmes et filles au Tchad: Prevention et Prise en charge".
- ⁹ <u>https://untf.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2020/09/resourcing-local-organizations-to-mitigate-risks-of-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-chad</u>

⁶ Spotlight Initiative. <u>Annual Report 1 July 2017 – 31 March 2018</u>.

⁷ <u>https://untf.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2020/11/investing-in-womens-movements-to-end-violence-against-women</u>

Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund

The COVID-19 global pandemic has presented grave new threats to the critical work and very existence of women civil-society organizations working on the front lines of crises, making the mandate of the **Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)** to mobilize support and advocate for their efforts more urgent than ever before. Local women-led and women's rights organizations around the world are playing key roles in supporting efforts to respond to and stem the spread of COVID-19 in their communities and respond to gender-specific needs, yet their critical work in contexts of conflict and humanitarian crises continues to be dramatically under-resourced.

WPHF Survey on COVID-19 Related Impacts & CSO Partner Needs

In March of 2020, as the world witnessed the precipitous rise of COVID-19, WPHF urgently mobilized efforts to conduct a <u>survey</u> assessing the experiences of its CSO grantees to better understand the impacts of the global pandemic on their work and organizations. Among its findings, almost 30% of CSO respondents reported that the existence of their organizations was at sincere risk due to the rapid shift in funding priorities of the international community in the face of the global pandemic, diverting critical resources away from local women's rights and women-led organizations in crises contexts.

It is against this backdrop that WPHF designed and launched the **WPHF COVID-19 Emergency Response Window (ERW)** to rapidly channel dedicated programmatic and institutional financing to local women's organizations threatened by and working to respond to COVID-19 in their communities. WPHF has supported through its new emergency response window **42 projects** implemented by **62 local organizations** in their COVID-19 response efforts in **18 countries** around the world.



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WPHF COVID-19 ERW Partner Highlights

In **Yemen**, WPHF is financing through its COVID-19 ERW the work of **SOS Center for Youth Capabilities Development** on a project that promotes women's leadership and community participation in all decision-making processes in response to COVID-19, fostering positive mechanisms for partnership and coordination between civil society organizations in preventing and responding to the global pandemic. This includes online trainings for civil society organizations and women leaders in the governorate of Aden on COVID-19 awareness raising, women's leadership, and UN Security Council Resolution 1325.



In Uganda, Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) is receiving institutional support through the WPHF COVID-19 Emergency Response Window to sustain its work enhancing the meaningful participation of women's organizations in local and national emergency response. WOUGNET is helping to improve the IT and technological infrastructure for its staff and local partners to enhance the use of digital platforms for continued advocacy and to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This institutional capacity building workshop promoted the use of online conferencing tools and remote

© DEC 2020 / WOUGNET technology to support the continued convening of online meetings to help curb the COVID-19 pandemic.

• Action Coalition on Gender-based Violence

As part of the <u>Generation Equality initiative</u>, Action Coalitions will define and drive catalytic commitments to accelerate implementation of gender equality. The **Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence** represents one of six Action Coalition themes whose effort recognizes that 25 years after the landmark World Conference on Women in Beijing, no country has yet achieved full gender equality.

Action Coalitions reflect one of the objectives of the Generation Equality Forum: to achieve tangible results on gender equality during the UN Decade of Action (2020-2030) to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals.

Action Coalitions are global innovative multi-stakeholder initiatives and include leaders from; Member States (from the Global South and North); Women's organizations, movements and civil society actors (from the Global South and North); Private sector entities (including philanthropic organizations); UN agencies and other international or regional organizations and Youth-led organizations. A complete list of all Action Coalitions and leaders may be found <u>here</u>.

On February 17th Action Coalition leaders together launched a call for other organizations to join them as "commitment-makers" in this landmark effort. Organizations interested in joining Action Coalitions can learn more about this opportunity <u>here</u>.

The vision of success for the Action Coalition on GBV is that:

- Multiple stakeholders build on commitments in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and make
 urgent and concrete new comprehensive commitments to address violence against women and girls in
 public, private and online spaces and in conflict and humanitarian contexts that are survivor-centered and
 backed by targeted and adequate financial and political resources.
- Women's Rights Organizations, including human rights defenders and girl's organizations are well resourced and have capacity to drive change as global leaders on addressing gender-based violence.
- Diverse leadership voices advocating against violence against women and girls including the voices of survivors, civil society organizations and youth activists are amplified across social and political arenas.
- Changes in gendered power relations and in harmful norms, stereotypes and practices accelerate progress on gender equality between women and men and act as key drivers for eliminating and preventing gender-based violence.
- An intersectional, evidence-driven approach is consistently integrated into all efforts to prevent and to respond to GBV including in institutions, ensuring that all women and girls have full ability to safely report and to access comprehensive services and specialized support.
- Legal frameworks are in place and implemented and impunity is addressed ensuring access to justice for survivors, full accountability of perpetrators and state's due diligence to prevent and respond to all acts of violence against women and girls.

The Vision of the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence aligns with the four pillars and key areas of policy actions in SG's "Political Engagement Strategy on GBV and COVID-19": Prevent, Respond, Fund and Collect; and Action Coalitions will present an opportunity to galvanize leaders to make commitments to build on the Strategy and to drive accelerated change on addressing gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.

United Nations-European Union Spotlight Initiative

The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030. As the largest global investment to eliminate violence against women and girls, the Initiative is incorporating a focus on COVID-19 into its programming¹⁰.

Through a partnership that fosters collaborative, innovative and participatory approaches, over the past two years, the Spotlight Initiative has focused on policy and law reform; the strengthening of institutions; prevention through transformative change of social norms, attitudes and behaviours; access to high-quality, comprehensive and multisectoral services; the strengthening of data collection; and support for women's rights organizations. Several programmes under the Spotlight Initiative include a response to COVID-19. At the start of the pandemic, United Nations teams immediately repurposed **\$21 million**, developing COVID-19 plans in all country programmes and ensuring that prevention and response efforts can continue, including by supporting online services, innovative access methods and the use of technology:

- In Liberia UN Women is supporting 25 grassroot CSOs with resources to address SGBV cases at community level. These CSOs included marginalized groups such as women with disabilities and LGBTIQs.
- In Uganda, Spotlight has supported the women's movement, including during the COVID-19 context by
 increasing the capacity of women led organisations to jointly advocate to end violence against women and
 sexual gender-based violence, harmful practices and sexual health & reproductive rights. These efforts have
 youth and marginalised women at the core and have reached 80 CSOs to date.
- In **Argentina** UN Women partnered with @fmujeresdelsur and @EquipoELA to develop "Activismos en Red" an innovative alliance that is strengthening civil society organizations' capacities in the COVID-19 context. Over 600 people have taken part in activities so far.
- In the **Pacific**, through UN Women Fiji Multi-country Office (covering Fiji, Republic of Marshall Islands & Solomon Islands), the Regional Spotlight supported civil society organizations to help them adapt to the COVID-19 context by strengthening their ability to operate virtually, including how to network online and engage with government officials virtually.
- In Kyrgyzstan a rapid gender analysis was conducted to analyse the participation and response of Civil Society Organisations, individuals, faith-based organizations and informal groups that provide services and support to women and girls during COVID-19 quarantine, especially in cases of GBV. The analysis contains recommendations on improving coordination mechanisms between the state, civil society and international development partners in order to strengthen the response to emergencies on women and girls.
- In **Guyana**, local civil society organisations were supported to respond to the alarming rates of VAW occurring during lockdown. The focus was particularly on underserved communities, including indigenous communities.

4. SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES: TAKE ACTION THIS ORANGE DAY!

All UNITE Campaign partners, including UN agencies, civil society, private sector, sports associations, youth groups, universities, schools etc. are encouraged to:

- Orange their workplace, schools, communities and online spaces to raise awareness about UNITE Campaign and its relevant theme on Orange Days: 25 February and 25 March.¹¹
- Advocate for flexible funding for Women's Rights Organizations working to address COVID-19 and end violence against women.

¹⁰ <u>The United Nations Secretary General's Report on "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls"</u> – 30 July 2020

- Advocate in their community to prioritize funding for a minimum package of essential services that include GBV prevention.
- Connect with survivor advocates, civil society and activist groups who are working on this issue in hosting awareness and fund-raising events, organize discussions around the importance of sustainable funding for Civil Society Organizations and Women's Rights Organizations to tackle GBV, especially during the pandemic.
- Ask CEOs of major corporations in their country to commit funding to end violence against women and use their
 resources and platforms to support the amplification of voices of survivors. Ask these corporations and other
 companies to issue commitment to adopting workplace policies to accommodate employees who are survivors of
 violence.
- Organize fund-raising events with the private sector for organizations that support survivors of violence and those who work towards ending violence against women.
- Private sector, artists, film makers and community organizations to run design or photography competitions which carry positive messages of ending violence against women, to host auctions of these artworks for fundraising for support services, survivors and organizations working to end violence against women.
- All UNITE partners to promote and showcase youth-led initiatives and fund-raising events in schools, universities and campuses to end violence women and girls.
- Donate to their local shelter and/or women's rights organization working to prevent and end violence against women and girls in their community.

5. SUGGESTED SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

Facebook & LinkedIn

Violence against women and girls, and particularly domestic violence, has dramatically escalated around the world in the context of the #Covid19 pandemic. This #OrangeDay, 25 February, <u>UNITE campaign</u> is emphasizing one of the key advocacy messages for action in the United Nations "<u>Inter-Agency Statement on Violence against</u> <u>Women and Girls in the Context of COVID-19</u> : "Make urgent and **flexible funding** available for women's rights organizations and recognize their role as first responders". <u>https://bit.ly/2OGxgzg</u> #ViolenceAgainstWomen @unwomen @SayNO.UNITE @UNTrustFund





WOMEN

 Shelter and safe accommodation, Specialist health and social services, Police and justice responses are among essential services that cater to survivors and those at risk of violence against women and girls during COVID-19.

Get into the spirit of #OrangeDay and support civil society and women's rights organizations who are tirelessly providing these services despite multifaceted challenges! @unwomen @SayNO_UNITE @UNTrustFund

 Violence is preventable and mitigating risks of violence is all the more important during COVID-19 when women and girls may be in lockdown with their abusers.

Policymakers can play a huge role in this regard by investing in **essential services** to ensure the safety of women and girls, and to avoid creating another generation of violence! @unwomen @SayNO_UNITE @UNTrustFundEVAW



WOMEN

[Note to reader: When posting for LinkedIn, please remove the handles and only include @UN_Women]

Twitter

- Since the outbreak of #COVID19, there has been a spike in reports of #ViolenceAgainstWomen. #OrangeDay is an opportunity to raise awareness and take action. Here's how: <u>https://bit.ly/Action4EVAW</u> via @UN_Women @SayNO_UNITE @UNTrustFundEVAW
- On #OrangeDay and beyond, we need urgent and flexible funding available for women's rights organizations and we must recognize their role as first responders. @UN_Women @SayNO_UNITE @UNTrustFundEVAW



- Mitigating risks of violence is all the more important during #COVID19 when women and girls may be in lockdown with their abusers. Policymakers can play a huge role by investing in #essentialservices to ensure the safety of women and girls!
 @UN_Women @SayNO_UNITE #OrangeDay
- What can be done to prevent & respond to #VAWG during #COVID19?
 Invest in package of #essentialservices w/ GBV prevention component,
 Leverage for more funding Lead by example on this #OrangeDay!
 @UN_Women @SayNO_UNITE
 @UNTrustFundEVAW



Instagram



• Civil society organizations and women's rights organizations have been on the front line providing timely responses to survivors & those at risk of violence. Make urgent and **flexible funding** available for women's rights organizations and recognize their role as first responders. Quote via @unitednations Secretary-General @antonioguterres @untrustfundevaw @unwomen @sayno_unite #OrangeDay

Governments can help protect women and their children from violence during COVID-19



• Providing sustainable **#funding** for civil society organizations and women's rights organizations is crucial in the fight to end violence against women and girls, especially during the pandemic. These are ways governments can help protect women and children from violence. #OrangeDay Visual via @WHO @unwomen @untrustfundevaw @sayno_unite

 Shelter and safe accommodation, Specialist health and social services, Police and justice responses are among #essentialservices that cater to survivors and those at risk of violence against women and girls during COVID-19.

Get into the spirit of #OrangeDay and support civil society and women's rights organizations who are tirelessly providing these services despite multifaceted challenges! @untrustfundevaw @unwomen @sayno_unite



Evaluation of Women with Disabilities of Uganda with new bikes to move from home to home to ensure legal assistance is available to women and girl survivors and those at risk of violence during COVID-19.

6. USEFUL RESOURCES

- i. <u>United Nations Policy Brief: "The Impact of COVID-19 on Women</u>" 9 April 2020.
- ii. <u>Statement by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres on Gender-Based Violence and COVID-19</u> 9 April 2020
- iii. <u>Statement by 146 UN Member States and Observers</u> to the appeal by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on Gender-Based Violence and COVID-19.
- iv. UN Inter-Agency Statement on Violence against Women and Girls in the Context of COVID-19
- v. <u>UNFPA Technical Note "Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on family planning and ending gender-based</u> violence, female genital mutilation and child marriage – 27 April 2020.
- vi. <u>UN Women and UNDP Covid-19 Global Gender Response Tracker</u>. The tracker monitors policy measures enacted by governments worldwide to tackle the COVID-19 crisis and includes national measures that are directly addressing violence against women.
- vii. <u>Report of the Secretary-General "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against</u> women and girls" – 30 July 2020
- viii. UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan Covid-19, April December 2020
- ix. UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women COVID-19 Brief <u>Initial Assessment "Impact of COVID-</u> <u>19 on Violence against Women and Girls through the Lens of Civil Society and Women's Rights</u> <u>Organizations"</u>
- x. UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women COVID-19 Brief <u>Second Assessment "COVID-19 and</u> the Impact on Civil Society Organizations Working to End Violence against Women and Girls".
- xi. The United Nations Secretary General's Report on the CSW65 priority theme "Women's full and

effective participation and decision making in public life, and the elimination of violence, for achieving

gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls"

- xii. <u>UN Trust Fund's Report to the Commission on the Status of Women for 2021.</u>
- xiii. COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Fact Sheets
- xiv. UN Women EVAW COVID-19 brief series
- xv. UN Covid-19 Social Media Assets & Messaging
- xvi. UN Women Explainer: How COVID-19 impacts women and girls
- xvii. <u>16 Days Orange The World 2020 Partners kit</u>