

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

ACTION CIRCULAR: April/ May 2021
Theme: PREVENT

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 surged alarmingly as COVID-19 spread and governments introduced lockdown measures to contain it. This was the <u>initial assessment</u> of the <u>UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund)</u>, 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.

In April 2020, the <u>United Nations Secretary-General urged all governments</u> ¹ to 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 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. 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.

¹ UN Policy Brief "The Impact of COVID-19 on Women" – 9 April 2020

All Governments are called to make commitments and undertake policy actions around 4 key action areas²:

- **❖** FUND
- **PREVENT**
- RESPOND
- **COLLECT**

During April and May 2021, the UNITE Campaign will be focusing its advocacy on the second action area of the "Political Engagement Strategy", PREVENT:

- Declare national zero tolerance policy for GBV with a concrete action plan in place.
- Launch a COVID-19 behavior change social mobilization campaign.³

On 9th March 2021, WHO, in close collaboration with UN Women, (on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Violence Against Women Estimation and Data), launched the "Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018". The new report⁴ is the largest ever study on the prevalence of violence against women and includes data from 161 countries and areas for intimate partner violence and 137 for non-partner sexual violence. The results presented in this report are the first available estimates for intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence in the Sustainable Development Goals reporting period of 2015 - 2030.

According to the report, an estimated 736 million women - almost 1 in 3 - have been subjected to intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence or both at least once in their life (30% of women aged 15 and older). The numbers indicate that violence against women is not a small problem that occurs in some pockets of society; rather, it is a persistent global public health problem of pandemic proportions.

In 2018, an estimated 1 in 7 women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner or husband in the past 12 months (13% of women aged 15-49). These numbers do not reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Increases in violence against women related to COVID-19 and lockdown measures are being reported to helplines, police forces and other service providers, which is a significant concern.

As the report highlights, ending violence against women is possible as we have growing evidence on what works to prevent violence against women and girls. The UN multiagency-endorsed <u>"RESPECT Women: Preventing violence against women"</u> and its <u>Implementation Package</u> provide policy-makers with a framework and process for designing prevention programmes, identifying entry points and evidence-based strategies; and monitoring progress.

The release of these estimates is a critical milestone to enhance the availability of data globally, drive political and public awareness, inform a more comprehensive and sustained response to ending violence against women globally, and monitor progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.2⁵ on elimination of violence against women and girls.

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.

² This call to action was developed from the 'UN Inter-Agency Statement on Violence Against Women and Girls in the context of COVID-19".

³ Attention on system & social norm shifts, positive masculinities, and GBV against women, including those facing overlapping inequalities.

⁴ "Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018" – WHO - 9 March 2021

⁵ https://sdgs.un.org/goals

- '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.

3. RELEVANT UN FUNDS, PROGRAMMES AND MOBILIZATION ACTIVITIES

UNTF to End Violence against Women

During its strategic plan, for the period of 2015–2020, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund), has invested \$47 million in projects that are solely or partly focused on **preventing violence against women and girls**. The majority of grantees engaged in prevention projects were women's organizations, which are also a strategic focus of UN Trust Fund investment. ⁶

Grantees have worked on the entire range of prevention and response activities relating to violence against girls in and around schools. For example, since 2015, as a result of the work of 71 grantees, 1,443 schools have improved their curricula or implemented policies, practices or services to prevent and respond to violence against women (including extracurricular school activities). That area of work was particularly affected by the closure of educational institutions in response to COVID-19. For example, in **Côte d'Ivoire**, the special education centre for girls with disabilities of Dignité et Droits pour les Enfants had to be closed during the lockdown. In addition, increased reliance on online delivery methods highlighted and exacerbated the digital divide and the need to leave no one behind. However, **prevention programmes remain vital in conjunction with specialist support services**. For example, a grantee in **Ukraine**, Eney, reported that, in the first month of lockdown, the national violence prevention hotline received 1,500 calls from survivors, compared to 1,100 calls per month before the restrictions. ⁷

A project implemented by the non-governmental organization CENDEROS with a small grant from the UN Trust Fund in **Costa Rica** specifically seeks to prevent violence against women and girls from **Nicaragua** who are at risk of or who have experienced gender-based violence. ⁸As the global pandemic wears on in neighboring Nicaragua, xenophobia, racism and other forms of violence targeting migrants and refugees started to rise at an alarming rate. The project is facing mounting challenges because COVID-19 has led to restrictions on movement, growing poverty and loss of support services, a toxic combination that has hugely increased violence against women and girls.

⁶ "Report of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the activities of the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women" – 10 December 2020

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ https://untf.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2020/10/un-trust-fund-grantee-cenderos-leaving-no-woman-behind-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-costa-rica

Adilia Solís, President at CENDEROS, said: "The stay-at-home order is a higher risk factor for women when they have to live with their aggressor. [They do not have] much margin to go out and report [hence] calls to the hotline have not gone up, so the authorities have assumed that violence against women is not a problem."



"LIVING WITHOUT VIOLENCE IS MY RIGHT".
COURTESY OF CENDEROS.

In response, CENDEROS is building community support that focuses on three main areas – **prevention**, care and monitoring – to ensure that women asylum-seekers, migrants and cross-border inhabitants can still access information and support services. This includes:

- continuing to inform women and girls about their rights,
- providing referrals to specialized services and networks for psychological and financial support, including remote or online income-generating activities,
- notifying the community about COVID-19 and its impact on gender-based violence,
- establishing community support groups ⁹ through which women can safely report violence and discrimination, and seek help directly from CENDEROS; and
- working with local governments and emergency commissions to prevent and respond to violence and discrimination against refugee women and girls.

The UN Trust Fund's <u>latest assessment</u> showed that COVID-19 has exposed a lack of sustainable and structural support around the world for ending violence against women and girls while economic insecurity and movement restrictions continue to drive the increased violence. It also showed that front line civil society and women's rights organizations urgently need greater recognition and support to ensure that no woman or girl is left behind in the pandemic.

Action Coalition on Gender-based Violence

The <u>Generation Equality Action Coalitions</u> are mobilizing governments, women's, feminist and youth-led organizations, international organizations, and the private sector to: catalyze collective action; spark global and local conversations among generations; drive increased public and private investment; and deliver concrete progress on gender equality across generations for girls and women.

Six specific themes are being addressed by the Action Coalitions: i) Gender-Based Violence; ii) Economic Justice and Rights; iii) Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); iv) Feminist action for climate justice; v) Technology and innovation for Gender Equality; vi) Feminist movements and leadership.

Action Coalition leaders have come together to define a targeted set of actions that are concrete, game-changing, measurable and require multi-stakeholder collaboration. The actions have been informed by a rigorous analysis of threats and challenges to women's and girls' human rights, as well as evidence about what strategies and tactics are effective in securing change. Actions are a central part of a Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality designed by the Action Coalitions leaders and that articulates an ambitious agenda that will accelerate progress towards gender equality in this UN Decade of Action in the six Action Coalitions themes.

The Action Coalition on Gender-Based violence (GBV) aims to deliver transformational progress towards the elimination and **prevention** of gender-based violence through four concrete actions:

⁹ "círculos de palabra" or "word circles"

- More states and regional actors ratify international and regional conventions and public and private sector institutions strengthen, implement and finance evidence-driven laws, policies and action plans to end gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity. In so doing, 550 million more women and girls will live in countries with laws and policies prohibiting all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls by 2026.
- Scale up implementation and financing of evidence-driven prevention strategies by public and private sector institutions and women's rights organizations to drive down prevalence of gender-based violence against women, adolescent girls and young women in all their diversity including in humanitarian settings. In so doing, increase by 50% the number of countries that include one or more evidence-driven prevention strategies on gender-based violence against women and girls in national policies by 2026.
- Scale up implementation and financing of coordinated survivor-centered, comprehensive, quality, accessible and affordable services for survivors of gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity including in humanitarian settings. In so doing, more women and girls will live in countries with multi-sectoral action plans on GBV which include provision of police, justice, health and social sector services by 2026.
- Enhance support and increase accountability and quality, flexible funding from states, private sector, foundations, and other donors to autonomous girl-led & women's rights organizations working to end gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity. In so doing, progressively improve and increase international funding by 50% to Women's rights organizations, activists and movements including those working to address gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity by 2026

These actions align squarely with the four pillars and key areas of policy actions in SG's "Political Engagement Strategy on GBV and COVID-19". The coalition brings together <u>seventeen leaders</u> (constituting multiple, diverse stakeholders, which includes UN Women and WHO as co leads from the UN system) to realize the vision of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and SDG targets 5.2 and 5.3; by <u>making and implementing concrete new comprehensive commitments</u> to address gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity through a survivor-centered approach that is backed by targeted and adequate financial and political resources.

One of the four Actions defined will specifically aim to scale-up the implementation and financing of evidence-driven **prevention** strategies by public and private sector institutions and women's rights organizations to drive down prevalence of gender-based violence against women, adolescent girls and young women in all their diversity including in humanitarian settings. In so doing, the number of countries that include one or more evidence-driven **prevention** strategies on gender-based violence against women and girls in national policies will be increased by 50% by 2026.

Delivering on the promise of making gender equality a lived reality for all women and girls, the seventeen GBV Action Coalition leaders together with <u>several commitment makers</u> across the globe will commit to the effective implementation of the defined actions to deliver transformational change to **prevent** and address gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.

Leaders and commitment makers will implement the defined actions by: i) adopting and implementing policies and legislation that can shift inequitable social and gender norms and address gender inequalities which are the root causes of gender-based violence; ii) ensuring the allocation of sufficient funding through increased domestic, ODA, private and philanthropic financing for scale up of practitioner- led and evidence-driven **prevention** strategies; iii) working with the education sector to **prevent** gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity by ensuring that schools and educational institutions are safe for all girls, adolescents and young women, and iv) implement evidence-driven **prevention** strategies which promote gender equality, challenge gender stereotypes and foster equitable norms, attitudes and beliefs from a young age, including through gender-sensitive curricula and comprehensive sexuality education.

Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund

The Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) is a global partnership designed to accelerate action and support for women's participation, leadership and empowerment in humanitarian response and peace and security settings. WPHF mobilizes critical financing for local women-led and women's rights organizations to prevent conflict and sexual and gender-based violence, respond to crises and emergencies, and seize key peacebuilding opportunities.

Strategic Partnerships to Prevent SGBV in Conflict & Crisis-Affected Settings

WPHF is partnering with the European Union's Global Spotlight Initiative (SI) to channel rapid financing to local women's organizations working to prevent and end sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in peace and security and humanitarian contexts. This innovative partnership focuses on supporting local women's organizations representing and working on behalf of groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the principle of leaving no one behind.

The WPHF and Spotlight Initiative Partnership has invested over **USD 13 Million**, supporting **73 projects** implemented by 122 women's organizations in 8 countries around the world: D.R.C, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea, Haiti.

WPHF + SI Partner Highlights

In **Uganda**, the WPHF and SI partnership is supporting the work of Umbrella of Hope Initiative (UHOPI) on a project to strengthen the capacities of communitybased organizations in conflict-affected areas to prevent and end SGBV. UHOPI works with co-implementing partners to empower survivors of SGBV, including women abducted by the LRA as children,





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using income generating activities such as shoe and bag production as a key SGBV prevention tool. In addition to training women to lead economic empowerment initiatives, UHOPI helps heal survivors as young as five years old through counselling and other creative forms of expression such as cultural dance.

In Liberia the WPHF and SI partnership is supporting the work of Foundation for Community Initiatives (FCI) on a project to reduce all forms of violence against women and girls in Montserrado, Grand Gedeh and Lofa Counties. FCI launched a new mobile application called SavApp enabling women, girls, men and boys in target communities to report cases of SGBV easier and quicker. This app targets in particular school going girls who are constantly faced with multiple forms of abuses at home, in the communities and at school. It is linked to the national data collection system. A similar App for the blind and visually impaired is currently being developed. The App is on Apple Store and is opened for feedback and modification based on users' review. It is currently being tested by the Gender Justice Clubs in Grand Cape Mount, Bomi and Margibi Counties.

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 **Mexico**, awareness campaign, "You are not alone" to raise awareness on GBV during COVID-19 was launched with the support of Spotlight Initiative.
- In **Uganda**, within the COVID-19 context, the SASA! training methodology promoted gender equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours in related to sexual reproductive health rights, reach a total of 22,193 (13,354 female and 7,891 male) community members of all ages.
- In **Liberia**, through the Spotlight Initiative, the UN worked with the National Council of Elders to monitor the implementation of the Ganta Declaration which calls for a one-year suspension of all female-genital mutilation activities; and to raise awareness among communities on measures to prevent the and respond to sexual and gender based violence in the context of COVID-19.
- In **Honduras**, under the 400 interventions with women sex workers aimed at increasing women's own awareness of the importance of reporting cases of violence and human rights violations faced by this group, including during the COVID-19 context.
- In **Samoa**, during the 16 days of activism, Spotlight supported conversations with communities on preventing violence against women and girls, including within the context of COVID-19, featuring a perspective from Faith Based Organizations.

UN Joint Programmes and Initiatives

UN Joint Global Programme on Essential Services¹¹:

• In Pakistan, UN Women has been supporting the national police force in a series of awareness-raising sessions in local schools and colleges on 'zero tolerance' for violence against women and girls and preventing such violence before it happens. 'Victim-blaming' has been cited as a major obstacle in Pakistan to the reporting of incidents, and police officers have undergone transformational training to change their attitudes and behaviour and have become less willing to assign blame to survivors for the violence they have experienced. Also under the Joint Programme, UNODC has been supporting a series of advocacy workshops with senior police management, with a focus on gender-responsive policing, and enhancing the number and the role of female police officers within the police force and, more specifically, in responding to gender-related crimes. A woman or girl who has experienced violence is more likely to report an incident to a female police officer, and increased numbers of women in law enforcement can contribute to more gender-responsive and survivor-centred responses, which in turn help to ensure the safety of women and girls, minimize their risk of revictimization, and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

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

¹¹ The United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence - UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP and UNODC.

Early 2021, UN Women, under the framework of the UN Joint Global Programme on Essential Services, and in
full consultation with UNODC and the International Association of Women Police (IAWP), launched a new
Handbook on Gender-Responsive Police Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence. The Handbook covers
in more depth than before areas such as: gender-responsive police investigations of crimes of VAWG, promoting
positive masculinities; institution-building, as well as prevention. The development and promotion of
institutional cultures founded on gender equality and gender responsiveness and service delivery is crucial to
prevention of violence against women and girls.

UN Women, UNFPA, OHCHR, together with the Joint Learning Initiative (JLI) and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Faith and GBV Hub will be organizing series of "Peer-to-Peer Webinars on Gender-based Violence in the Context of COVID-19 and Beyond" throughout 2021. The aim of the webinars is stimulating a structured discussion with faith and other key actors on addressing gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19 and beyond, where the participants will discuss experience and opportunities to:

- ✓ Engage in multi-faith dialogues in their communities to raise awareness to the issue and develop an aligned narrative across faiths to prevent violence in the first place and prevent impunity.
- ✓ Issue inter-faith statements in the national media to raise awareness to the issue.
- ✓ Co-produce with local communities' community protection knowledge kits and disseminate them.
- ✓ Advocate to align customary law with formal legislation on violence against women and girls, child and forced marriage, FGM and other harmful practices.
- ✓ Build partnerships to support service provision / preventative measures in communities through enhanced collaboration with civil society, including faith actors.
- ✓ Engage in inter-generational / inter-faith dialogues and partnerships to empower young people to transform negative gender and social norms.
- ✓ Strengthen evidence based/faith based GBV prevention and response efforts.

OHCHR

During the two past months, OHCHR and its partners organized, and supported actions aimed at **preventing** GBV in the context the COVID-19 pandemic - as defined in the UNSG's call of April 2020. These refer in particular to calls by the High Commissioner, including during the celebration of International Women's Day, public awareness actions, as well as mobilization in support of national and regional actors.

Global Events/ Calls

On 8 March 2021, on the occasion of International Women's Day under the theme "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world", the President of the Human Rights Council said that reflecting on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women, especially the victims of unreported abuse and violence was key.

<u>In her statement</u>, High Commissioner Bachelet restated her call for the protection of women survivors, especially those belonging to marginalized and discriminated groups, who are among the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 17 March 2021, the **Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women** and **OHCHR** organized a **High-level panel** at the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The high-level panel took stock of the work of the EDVAW Platform and its links with the Commission on the Status of Women, and called for the Commission to promote a human rights based approach in the implementation of strategies for ending violence and discrimination against women, particular in the current pandemic context.

Highlights from the field

• Regional Office for Southern Africa

On 8 March, in commemoration of International Women's Day, OHCHR released an advocacy <u>brief</u> highlighting the situation of women in southern Africa with respect to COVID-19 and the right to participation. The brief draws on the human rights obligations of States in the region and is aligned with the UN Secretary- General's policy brief on the impact of COVID-19 on women. The brief was shared widely, including with the Resident Coordinators in the region, with the aim of contributing to ongoing discussions on the importance of women's participation in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

• Regional Office for Eastern Africa

On 6 March, the OHCHR gender team, in collaboration with the Ethiopia Youth and Cultural Development Association and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, jointly convened a half-day conference aimed at showcasing the work of women leaders in Ethiopia and offering a platform for discussion on women and girls' role on building back better. The conference included a panel discussion among students from four high schools in Addis Ababa on the impact of COVID-19 on girls' access to education, followed by two presentations on gender equality and education and impact of COVID-19 on domestic violence.

• Regional Office for Southern America

In Latin America, UN Women and OHCHR attended the 60th meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean held virtually from 23 to 25 February. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) organized the conference during which ministers reported on the progress of the "Santiago Commitment" in the context of COVID-19. They also supported the incorporation of a gender perspective in policies to respond to the pandemic that overcome violence and inequality affecting women. Participants finally reaffirmed their commitment to accelerate the implementation of CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration, and Platform for Action and the Regional Gender Agenda; and agreed to promote a regional Alliance for the digitization of women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Azerbaijan

On 12 February, OHCHR jointly with UNFPA organized an online seminar for 16 representatives of national CSOs and practicing lawyers on the impact of COVID-19 on women's rights and gender equality. The seminar aimed at raising the awareness of participants of the guiding documents and statements issued by OHCHR and CEDAW on heightened risks of gender-based violence (GBV) and discrimination faced by women due to the COVID-19 crisis. OHCHR provided the participants with an overview of promising practices and actions recommended by OHCHR, CEDAW and UN Special Procedures mandate holders for addressing heightened risks of exposure to GBV and for upholding the rights of women and girls in times of COVID-19 pandemic. UNFPA and OHCHR also presented the findings of a rapid gender assessment (RGA) recently conducted by UNFPA and UN Women to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality.

• Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 16 March 2021, the UN Joint Human Rights Office organized a workshop to mark International Women's Day in Kinshasa. Its objective was to reflect on the situation of women in the DRC, to raise public awareness on women's rights, discuss possible challenges in the face of the pandemic of COVID-19, ways to advance women's rights and curb physical and mental violence against women.

Mauritania

On 17 March, OHCHR-Mauritania participated to a workshop on "Women's leadership for an equal future in a world marked by COVID -19". This workshop was organized by the NHRC with the support of the OHCHR-Mauritania to benefit the Network of Local Elected Women Section of Mauritania (REFEAL). During this workshop, the office raised some issues, including women's leadership in Mauritania that lacked visibility and the impact of COVID-19 on women's leadership. OHCHR-Mauritania made some recommendations to give visibility to the commitment of women, maintain the gains in the field of women's rights, and the involvement of women to meet the many challenges faced in Mauritania.

Niger

On 8 March, at the occasion of the International Women's Day, OHCHR had a joint conference-debate with UN Women (Spotlight initiative) around the theme "Women's leadership: for an equal future in a COVID-19 world". This event allowed different actors of the Nigerien civil society to take stock of elimination of GBV, women's political participation, and the achievements in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment.

• Russia Federation

On 11 March, OHCHR team in Russia, the Moscow city Ombudsman and the Forum of Moscow Women organized a round table discussion on "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world" devoted to the International Women's Day. Participants focused on the leading role of women who are at the forefront of the battle against COVID-19 regressive effects in different areas including health care, social protection, education, labour, access to information and countering domestic violence. Ms. Dalia Leinarte, member of the CEDAW Committee, made a presentation about "Women and political leadership: old challenges, new directions". WHO Director Dr. Melita Vujnovic spoke about the lessons of the pandemic to improve the quality of medical and social assistance. Other participants included UN agencies in Russia (WHO, UNIC, ILO, UNHCR), the speaker and deputies of the Moscow city parliament, the Minister of social protection of the Moscow city government, members of the Federation Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, women human rights defenders, civic activists, representatives of the business community and members of the academia.

Ukraine

On 24 March, OHCHR delivered a statement at an online roundtable of the parliamentary human rights committee on "Ensuring gender equality during the COVID-19 pandemic", involving members of Parliament, public authorities, and international organizations. The statement covered the impact of the pandemic on the human rights of women, in particular Roma women, homeless women, and women with disabilities, as well as the situation of women who represent the majority of healthcare workers, and women human rights defenders.

Social Media Mobilization

Iraq

OHCHR (UN Mission in Iraq) pursued its advocacy and awareness-raising campaign on human rights and COVID-19. Latest cartoon by an Iraqi artist was released on 06 March and 07 March and can be found on UNAMI's Facebook page. This follows a series of messages posted on social media during the last 16 Days Campaign.

UNDP

The <u>Global Covid-19 Gender Response Tracker</u> which is coordinated by UNDP, with substantive technical leadership of UN Women, was first launched in September 2020. It monitors responses taken by governments worldwide to tackle the pandemic, and highlights those that have integrated a gender lens. It captures two types of government responses: women's participation in COVID-19 task forces and national policy measures taken by governments. It analyzes which of

the policy measures address women's economic and social security, including unpaid care work, the labour market and **violence against women**. The Tracker can provide guidance for policymakers and evidence for advocates to ensure a gender-sensitive COVID-19 policy response.¹²

The March 2021 update added the Tracker a new module on women's leadership and representation in COVID-19 taskforces, with sex-disaggregated data for a total of 334 taskforces across 187 countries. The update also added over 600 new measures taken in response to the pandemic.

The Tracker now covers **3,112 measures across 219 countries and territories** (up from 2,517 measures / 206 countries in September 2020). Most gender-sensitive measures in the global tracker continue to focus on addressing VAWG.

Some 64% of all gender-sensitive measures focus on preventing and/or responding to VAWG (832 across 149 countries). This is a heartening response to the UN Secretary General's call to action and the demands of women's movements.

Highlights from the field

- **UNDP Albania** has been supporting central and local level initiatives in the country around the UNITE Campaign Theme. In partnership with local, central state and non-state actors, UNDP Albania contributed to a variety of events/products that echo the global theme: "Orange the World: Fund, Prevent, Respond, Collect!".
 - A powerful awareness raising video spotting out messages against sexual violence was produced with the aim to prevent this severe human rights violation and empower women, girls, men and boys in the Albanian society. The video focuses on the profiles of sexual violence victims, prevailing stereotypes around sexual violence and providing information on available services and assistance; and can be watched here.
- UNDP Kazakhstan also supported the UNiTE Campaign global theme with a video calling on everyone not to be
 indifferent to violence, not to stigmatize survivors of violence, and to promote equal rights and opportunities for
 women and men. The video was first published on 25th November, International Day for the Elimination of
 Violence against Women, and can be reached here.
- **UNDP Ukraine,** jointly with UN Women, UNFPA and other UN agencies, conducted an <u>interactive campaign</u> and developed communications materials under the 2020 UNITE campaign theme "Orange the World: Fund, Prevent, Respond, Collect!":
 - The <u>New Scars project</u>, created in collaboration of UN in Ukraine and the Wild Theatre, collected real stories of Ukrainian women, and their physical and mental wounds that cannot not heal. Through various art formats, viewers were able to hear these stories on the stage of the <u>theater</u>, on television (UA: Culture and MEGOGO), on <u>Facebook</u>, as well as co-create their own theatrical performance in an interactive game format with multiple endings.
 - 2. A set of <u>infographics</u> with facts on the issue of gender-based violence (<u>Instagram post</u>).
 - 3. In support to the movement against gender-based violence, people were encouraged to step up and share the stories against violence on social media and choose an orange item of clothing, make-up or accessory for photos and videos (Instagram post, Instagram post).
 - 4. In the city of Kyiv, the <u>Gulliver shopping mall</u> illuminated the <u>building in orange</u> for 16 days, and on 25 November displayed a thematic image on the building.

¹² https://data.undp.org/gendertracker/

UNFPA

- UNFPA supported the development of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Model Law on GBV, bringing together 40 members from Regional Economic Commissions, CSOs, WROs, UN agencies, universities and research institutes. The SADC Model Law on GBV will cover the <u>16 SADC Member States</u> and is expected to be approved by August 2021.
- With WHO, UNFPA supported the development of roadmaps on integrated GBV-SRHR services for **14 East and Southern Africa countries** that will guide implementation of multisectoral response to GBV and will be implemented throughout 2021 under the Swedish funded Programme "Together for SRHR".
- UNFPA with UN Women ESARO carried out Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing survey initiative on the impact of COVID-19 on women and men in 7 East and Southern Africa countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda). The regional report¹³ was launched on 10 March with a panel of experts from the World Bank, UNECA, the African Development Bank, African scholars, and African feminist economists. Next steps will be the launching of the country-level reports.
- Innovative models to ensure that women and girls most at risk of GBV have access to quality GBV services were developed as part of UNFPA reprogramming in the COVID-19 context. Models such as GBV mobile clinics, mobile One Stop Centers, e-justice services, mobile GBV courts to fast track GBV cases were developed in **East and Southern Africa**. These models have been developed under the "Spotlight Initiative to Prevent VAWG". Due to their effectiveness in reaching out vulnerable and marginalized women and girls; and in providing quality GBV services government counterparts and stakeholders have requested the Models' replication and upscale to new geographic areas.
- UNFPA ESARO Jointly with UN Women and the Council of Traditional Leaders in Africa (COTLA), convened a <u>High</u>
 <u>level dialogue with African Traditional Leaders</u> to advance SRHR and the end of GBV and Harmful Practices (HP).
 Traditional leaders from **Niger, Zambia, Eswatini, Nigeria, Uganda** came together to discuss strategies and approaches to advance SRHR and end GBV and HP in the current context.
- As a founding and active member of the first Regional Working Group on GBV (RGBV WG) for East and Southern Africa, and on response to COVID-19, UNFPA ESARO supported the development and dissemination of the following key guiding documents and interventions: i) Guidance on Priority Action to prevent and respond to GBV in the COVID-19 context, ii) Guidance note for COVID-19 dignity kits (content & distribution); iii) Key messages on GBV and PSEA in the COVID-19 context; iv) Policy brief on the importance of recognizing GBV services as essential in the COVID-19 response/ plan, including the UNFPA ESARO analysis on members states recognition of GBV services as essential; and v) Two Advocacy Briefs about GBV in Cabo Delgado (Mozambique) and the Tigray situation (Ethiopia) contexts.

UNHCR

Strengthening GBV prevention

• To prevent violence against women and girls in **Zimbabwe** and in consultation with them, dialogues with men were conducted by UNHCR and partners as part of GBV transformative behavioral change interventions.

^{13 &}quot;Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in East and Southern Africa" – March 2021 – UNFPA and UN Women

- In Pakistan, UNHCR collaborates with female Outreach Volunteers (OVs), community mobilisers and gender support groups to enhance outreach and communication on COVID-19 preventive measures, including addressing social stigma and psychosocial support.
- In **Lebanon**, while urgent high-risk cases continue to receive services in-person, UNHCR also provides emergency cash assistance, remote individual case management and psycho-social counselling over the phone for women and girls as well as LGBTI individuals and other persons with specific needs during the pandemic. Remote modalities also include GBV prevention group sessions for women via digital platforms used by local community networks. A coaching program for GBV case managers is conducted through tailored online sessions adapted to the context of the pandemic.
- In **Egypt**, UNFPA-UNHCR cash assistance project has benefitted GBV survivors and those at high risk of GBV through the disbursement of either 3 or 6 months interim cash and, in other instances, one-time emergency cash assistance, as part of a holistic GBV case management response.
- In **Colombia**, UNHCR funded-safe shelters for GBV survivors in the border departments of La Guajira and North Santander continue to function and provide comprehensive care in compliance with the quarantine regulations and all health recommendations to contain the spread of COVID-19.
- As part of the 16 days of activism against GBV in Syria, a total of 865 activities targeting more than 200,000 women and girls, men and boys, older persons and persons with specific needs were conducted remotely and in person, inside schools, child-friendly spaces, community centers, and public spaces. These activities contributed to highlight particular risks of GBV, which have been exacerbated during the pandemic and helped disseminate information on GBV services.
- In **Yemen**, UNHCR's partners engaged refugee and internally displaced women in the production of non-medical fabric facemasks, which were later distributed among persons of concern, host communities and staff. This activity provides an opportunity for refugee women to safely earn an income to support themselves and their families.

UNODC

Highlights from the field

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in **Mexico** has developed the United Nations Advanced Prison Standards (UNAPS) project, an evaluation, and certification model to strengthen Mexican penitentiary institutions and to improve the quality of life and conditions of persons deprived of their liberty, prison staff, children living in prison with their mothers and their visitors.

UNAPS model was developed as a unique system of evaluation according to national and international regulations and focus on human rights, governability, justice, and social reintegration. Thanks to a strategic alliance with the Mexican Government through the National Conference of the Penitentiary System, its creation was possible. The model has been completed and is ready to be implemented by the country's prisons. UNAPS model has been promoted in the more than 250 prisons in the country through the 32 state penitentiary administrations and the federal penitentiary administration. The model UNAPS¹⁴ can be downloaded in this <u>link</u> (Spanish version).

¹⁴ United Nations Advanced Standards for the Mexican Penitentiary System (UNAPS)

The Human Rights Commission in Mexico points out that most prisons where both men and women are deprived of their liberty have deficiencies in meeting the needs of women and providing them with a dignified and safe stay and their daughters and sons who live with them. This, considering that the prisons were initially intended to house men in many cases and that along the way, they have had to adapt to also house women. ¹⁵

This insufficiency includes failure in the separation of men and women, the violation to their privacy and decent treatment, unequal access to medical services and to other places such as classrooms and visit areas, irregularities in the preparation and distribution of enough food for women and children, unequal access to the rehabilitation programs, among others.

How does UNAPS include the gender and intersectional approach and human-centered design?

The Standards of the model, based on national and international legal instruments and good practices, including the <u>Bangkok Rules</u>, are focused on prisons for the adult population, women and men, in state and federal prisons. The importance of these standards resides in the fact that their design methodology puts the person at the center of the analysis and identifies the differences between men and women, resulting in the guarantee, protection, and strengthening of the people's human rights within prisons.

How is this approach applied to the prevention of violence against women?

UNAPS model evaluates and guides prison staff to fulfill their obligations as a state authority towards women and girls.

Within the standards, the model contains elements that directly attend the **prevention of violence**, such as separation of men and women inside prisons; medical examination by doctors of the same-sex of the patient; specialized care and treatment to girls and women living with HIV and other health conditions inside prisons; procedures, informative material, training, psychological help and medical treatment to victims of violence (including sexual harassment, domestic violence, and rape); medical care to women in pregnancy, breastfeeding or puerperium and prohibition of any punishment to them during any of these phases; decent work and maternity permissions; training to the staff to prevent discrimination and promote equality, adequate spaces, and material for the development of girls living inside prisons.

These actions to prevent and eliminate violence against women are encompassed in 24 standards, covering the three blocks of the model: governability, justice, and social reintegration.

The UNAPS standards that include actions to prevent and eliminate violence against women inside prisons can be found here.

UN WOMEN

- In Vanuatu, UN Women has supported the Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) to undertake community awareness-raising on prevention and response to violence against women and girls and to implement the Male Advocacy Program. Through 'mobile counselling', VWC staff and volunteers in Committees Against Violence Against Women and Girls, conduct awareness raising in rural and remote communities, with police and other male advocates contributing to sessions. In the Male Advocacy Program, VWC trains police, chiefs and other male leaders to become agents of change in their communities. Police graduates from this 4-week program have gained a greater understanding of the causes of VAWG and their roles; and have gone on to join mobile counselling teams or run community awareness sessions on prevention as part of special event days.
- In **Ukraine**, UN Women is helping to build the knowledge and skills of district and patrol police to enhance their capacities for effective prevention and response to violence against women and girls. Law enforcement are key

¹⁵ National Commission of Human Rights in Mexico

partners in 18 community security working groups in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, alongside local authorities, women's groups, schools, and communities to identify solutions to safety and security concerns and prevent violence against women and girls from happening in the first place.

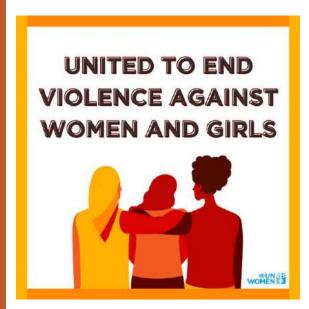
4. SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES: TAKE ACTION THIS ORANGE DAY!

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 April and 25 May.¹⁶
- Connect with civil society, faith-based organizations, educators and activist groups; and advocate together for strategies that challenge harmful gender attitudes, beliefs, norms and stereotypes.
- Call for political commitment and leadership, petition governments, public and private sector institutions to ratify
 international and regional conventions; implement laws, policies and action plans that promote gender equality
 and economic and social empowerment strategies for women and girls.
- Organize social media campaigns and fund-raising events; and advocate for investing in women's organizations and allocating resources to prevention.
- Call for efforts by policymakers and others to strengthen the enabling environment for VAW prevention, by
 allocating resources to programmes, research and capacity-building of health, education, law enforcement, and
 social services.
- Advocate for efforts to create safe schools, public spaces and work environments for women and girls.
- Promote and showcase youth-led initiatives 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, the <u>UNITE campaign</u> is emphasizing one of the key advocacy messages for action in the United Nations "Inter-Agency Statement on Violence against Women and Girls in the Context of COVID-19: Putting preventative measures in place and investing in medium/longer-term approaches to tackle the root causes of gender inequality that work to prevent violence against women and girls. https://bit.ly/20Gxgzg #ViolenceAgainstWomen

<u>LinkedIn:</u> @unwomen @unodc @UN @undp @ocha @who @unicef @unfpa @iom

<u>Facebook</u>: @unwomen @unodc @unitednations @UNDP @UNOCHA @WHO @unicef @UNFPA @IOM @UNTrustFund @SayNO.UNITE @unitednationshumanrights

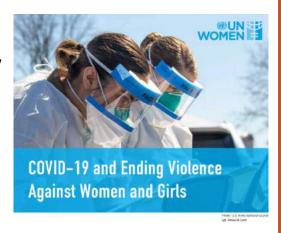
¹⁶ UN Women - Orange the World Partners Kit

Since the outbreak of #COVID19, violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified. Here are UN Women's recommendations to prevent and respond to this "shadow pandemic" at the onset, during & after the public health crisis. https://bit.ly/3sgpqeP

#ViolenceAgainstWomen

LinkedIn: @unwomen

Facebook: @unwomen @UNTrustFund @SayNO.UNiTE





• Check out the recently published "RESPECT Women:

Preventing Violence against Women Implementation Package"; a suite of practical resources and tools to support the implementation of the "2019 RESPECT Women: Prevention

Violence against Women Framework". The package builds on a vast evidence base of what policies and programmes work in preventing violence against women and girls—including entry points identified in the 2015 Framework to underpin action to prevention violence against women—so we can scale up prevention work in the years ahead. #ViolenceAgainstWomen

[PNG & GIF versions: https://trello.com/c/TwVd103g]

LinkedIn: @unwomen @who

Facebook: @unwomen @WHO @UNTrustFund @SayNO.UNITE

There can be no excuse for violence against women. That
includes the #COVID19 pandemic. More needs to be done to
prioritize addressing violence against women and it starts with
prevention and awareness-raising. Everyone has a role to play.
http://unwo.men/8THd50AAiaW #ViolenceAgainstWomen

LinkedIn: @unwomen

Facebook: @unwomen @UNTrustFund @SayNO.UNiTE



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: https://bit.ly/Action4EVAW via @UN_Women @SayNO_UNITE @UNTrustFundEVAW

[UPLOAD: https://trello.com/c/piG70cSS]

- **Prevention** is the only way to stop violence before it even occurs. We work together with the Council of Traditional Leaders in Africa (#COTLA) to transform cultural norms that perpetuate harmful practices against women and girls. https://youtu.be/OeM3K5So4MQ @UN Women @SayNO UNITE
- Watch how UN Trust Fund Grantee @SOARInitiative works to prevent violence against girls by mobilizing communities and schools in two communities in Abuja, Nigeria https://youtu.be/01sXAOolK7I @UN_Women @SayNO_UNITE @UNTrustFundEVAW
- Watch @UN_Women Goodwill Ambassador and Academy-Award winning actor #NicoleKidman who raises awareness on ending #ViolenceAgainstWomen during and after the #COVID19 pandemic: pic.twitter.com/JpDEcodnvG @SayNO UNITE @UNTrustFundEVAW
- Religious leaders can play a key role in prevention by encouraging all communities to promote nonviolence. Quote via @UN Secretary-General @antonioguterres @UN_Women @SayNO_UNITE @UNTrustFundEVAW



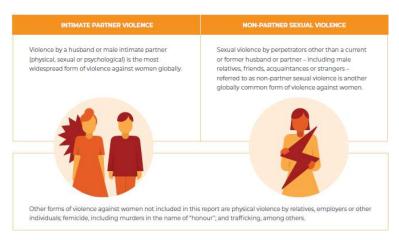
Instagram



- As the @unitednations system, we are dedicated to ending violence against women and girls and stand ready to support efforts in this regard. During these challenging times, we must, more than ever, be vigilant to end violence against women & girls. In our joint statement, we highlight six critical areas for action:
- **1.** Make urgent and flexible funding available for women's rights organizations and recognize their role as first responders,
- **2.** Support health and social services to continue their duty of care to VAW survivors and to remain accessible, especially to those most likely to be left behind,
- **3.** Ensure that services for VAWG survivors are regarded as essential, remain open and are resourced and made accessible especially to those most likely to be left behind,
- 4. Place a high priority on police and justice responses,
- 5. Put preventative measures in place,
- **6.** Collect data only if it is clear that it is needed, it will be used to improve services/programmes and ethical and safety standards can be met.

@unwomen, #unodc, @undp, @un_ocha, @who, @unicef, @unfpa, @ unmigration, @ unitednationshumanrights

According to the recently released
 "Violence Against Women Prevalence
 Estimates, 2018" report by WHO (on behalf
 of the United Nations Inter-Agency
 Working Group on Violence Against
 Women Estimation and Data), an
 estimated 736 million women - almost 1
 in 3 - have been subjected to intimate
 partner violence, non-partner sexual
 violence or both at least once in their life
 (30% of women aged 15 and older).
 Violence against women is not a small



problem that occurs in some pockets of society; rather, it is a persistent global public health problem of pandemic proportions.

In 2018, an estimated 1 in 7 women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner or husband in the past 12 months (13% of women aged 15-49). **These numbers do not reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.** Increases in violence against women related to COVID-19 and lockdown measures are being reported to helplines, police forces and other service providers, which is a significant concern.

Violence against women is preventable. We know more than ever before about what works to **prevent** violence against women and girls. Promising **prevention programmes** exist. Check the report here: https://bit.ly/3tnNWL8 #ViolenceAgainstWomen @unwomen @who @untrustfundevaw @sayno unite

Violence against women is preventable. We know more than ever before about what works to prevent violence against women and girls. Check out the recently published "RESPECT Women: Preventing Violence against Women Implementation Package"; a suite of practical resources and tools to support the implementation of the "2019 RESPECT Women: Prevention Violence against Women Framework". https://bit.ly/3cLTZm3 #ViolenceAgainstWomen

@unwomen @who @untrustfundevaw @sayno unite



6. USEFUL RESOURCES

- i. UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women COVID-19 Brief <u>Initial Assessment "Impact of COVID-19 on Violence against Women and Girls through the Lens of Civil Society and Women's Rights Organizations"</u>
- ii. 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".
- iii. <u>United Nations Policy Brief: "The Impact of COVID-19 on Women"</u>
- iv. Statement by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres on Gender-Based Violence and COVID-19
- v. <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.
- vi. <u>UN Inter-Agency Statement on Violence against Women and Girls in the Context of COVID-19</u>
- vii. WHO "Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018"
- viii. "RESPECT Women: Preventing violence against women"
- ix. "RESPECT Women: Preventing violence against women Implementation package"
- x. "Report of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the activities of the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women"
- xi. Generation Equality Action Coalition Blueprint on Gender-Based Violence
- xii. UN Women and UNDP Covid-19 Global Gender Response Tracker
- xiii. Report of the Secretary-General "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls"
- xiv. UN WOMEN and UNODC "Handbook on gender-responsive police services for women and girls subject to violence"
- xv. UN WOMEN COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Fact Sheets
- xvi. UN WOMEN and UNFPA <u>"Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in East and Southern Africa"</u>
- xvii. UN WOMEN EVAW COVID-19 brief series
- xviii. UN COVID-19 Social Media Assets & Messaging
- xix. UN WOMEN Explainer: How COVID-19 impacts women and girls
- xx. UN WOMEN 16 Days Orange The World 2020 Partners kit
- xxi. UN WOMEN "A framework to underpin action to prevent violence against women" 2015
- xxii. UN WOMEN Brief "Prevention: Violence against women and girls and COVID-19"
- xxiii. UN WOMEN "10 Essentials to Prevent Violence against Women"
- xxiv. World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and UN Women "Voices against Violence" 2013
- xxv. WHO "INSPIRE: Seven strategies for Ending Violence Against Children" 2016