



Official United Nations Commemoration of the
International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

UNiTE: Invest to Prevent Violence against Women & Girls!

Wednesday, 22 November 2023 -- Time: 10:00 - 11:30 am

Venue: ECOSOC Chamber I

CONTEXT

Violence against women and girls remains the most prevalent and pervasive human rights violation in the world. Despite many countries passing laws to prevent and end violence against women, weak enforcement and discriminatory social norms at institutional, individual and community levels remain a dire hinderance to women and girls living out their human rights. Globally, an estimated 736 million women — almost one in three — have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both, at least once in their life.

Violence against women has been heightened across different settings as well, including public spaces, the workspace and online. A global study by the Economist Intelligence Unit found that 38 per cent of women have had personal experiences of online violence, and 85 per cent of women who spend time online have witnessed digital violence against other women and girls. Across five regions, [82 per cent of women parliamentarians](#) reported having experienced some form of psychological violence while serving their terms. This included remarks, gestures, and images of a sexist or humiliating sexual nature, threats, and mobbing. Women cited social media as the main channel of this type of violence, and nearly half (44 per cent) reported receiving death, rape, assault, or abduction threats towards them or their families.

Furthermore, natural and human-made disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts, and climate change have further intensified VAWG, exacerbated existing challenges and generated new and emerging threats. Economic insecurity, disrupted livelihoods and limited social protection continue to increase women and girls' vulnerability to violence and their access to essential services⁵. According to the [Rapid Gender Assessment surveys](#) (RGAs) on the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 conducted by UN Women in 58 countries, 45 per cent of women reported that they or a woman they know has experienced a form of VAW since COVID-19.

The good news is that VAWG is preventable and there is more evidence than ever before about what works. The RESPECT Framework is a comprehensive framework with evidence-based strategies that have demonstrated positive results in the prevention and response to violence against women and girls which presents member states, development partners and the private sector with strong options for investments. The global EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, the largest targeted effort to



eliminate violence against women and girls led by the United Nations, is demonstrating that a significant, concerted and comprehensive investment in ending violence can make a transformative difference in the lives of women and girls¹.

In efforts to build back better from the pandemic and multiple, overlapping crises, investments in preventing violence against women and girls are more important than ever. These investments have tremendous benefits for gender equality, poverty reduction and development. However, less than .002 per cent of global Official Development Assistance (ODA) is directed to GBV prevention, and that funding is often poor quality, short-term and sporadic. Few national governments have transformative GBV prevention policies or align their budgets with prevention strategies and interventions.²

In 2023, the UNiTE campaign theme is **Invest to Prevent Violence against Women & Girls** and will focus on the importance of financing prevention strategies to stop violence from occurring in the first place. This year's UNiTE campaign will leverage key global normative and advocacy platforms to build momentum and galvanize collective efforts to prevent violence against women. This year's campaign theme is also aligned to the 2024 priority theme of the Commission on the Status of Women, focused on *Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective*. The campaign and the Commemoration event will also be an activation moment for the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights (EJR) to build on the momentum of the Generation Equality midpoint moment, and the SDG midpoint summit, held in September 2023 to amplify commitments and investments to prevent gender based violence against women and girls. Please refer to the [UNiTE Campaign Concept Note](#) which provides further information.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EVENT

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

- **Invite everyone to be an ally in preventing VAWG** through taking a stand publicly, engaging in activities and events to raise awareness of VAWG in their communities.
- **Mobilize all member states to allocate national budget to prevent violence against women and girls**, including through their own national action plans and prevention across education, health, and social protection sectors by incorporating VAWG prevention.
- **Advocate for increasing ODA** towards prevention of VAW, in line with national priorities and to support policy formulation, if feasible.
- **Call for greater support, increased long-term, sustainable investments** from states, private sector, foundations, and other donors **to autonomous women's rights organizations** working to end violence against women and girls in all their diversity.
- **Advocate for private and public sector investments on workplace** policies and measures that ensure women's economic security and safety.
- **Mobilize member states, development partners, philanthropies, private sector, universities and all actors to join the Generation Equality Action Coalition on GBV** and make tangible policy, programmatic and financial commitments to accelerate transformative action to end all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, including through:

¹ www.spotlightinitiative.org/publications/spotlight-initiative-global-annual-narrative-progress-report-2022

² <https://preventgbv.org/shared-advocacy-agenda>



- Investing in the [collective commitment on prevention](#), and
- Joining the collective commitment of the Action Coalition on GBV and the Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights on [gender based violence and harassment in the world of work](#) and to ratify and implement the ILO Convention 190.³

PARTICIPANTS AND AUDIENCE

The *Official UN Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women* will be a multi-stakeholder event with the participation of high-level representatives of Member States, women's civil society organizations, United Nations agencies, Leaders and/or Commitment Makers of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence and Goodwill Ambassadors.

FORMAT

The commemoration event will take place in person in the ECOSOC Chamber and be broadcast live through UN Women's YouTube channel. This event will provide an opportunity to push the needle on the commitments and investment on prevention, including through Generation Equality and its Action Coalitions. The event will consist of four segments:

SEGMENT 1: OPENING REMARKS

This segment will include opening remarks from the Secretary General, followed by UN Women's Executive Director intervention, and aligned with the key messages of the [2023 UNiTE Campaign](#). High-level representatives from Member States, UN organizations and civil society organizations including AC GBV leaders and commitment makers, will highlight the discontent at the global scale of social and economic crisis, its disproportionate impacts on women and girls, and the high levels of VAW. In this context of growing inequalities, the ED will shed light on the evidence demonstrating that VAW can be prevented, and the imperative to scale up global investments to prevent VAW.

SEGMENT 2: WHY INVESTING IN VAW/G PREVENTION MATTERS? WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SHOW?

The second segment will set the scene on the need to invest in VAW.G prevention and highlight the evidence on what works to prevent violence at scale. Effective approaches will be highlighted, including combined economic and social empowerment interventions, investing in women rights organizations, transforming gender social norms, and strengthening essential services for survivors. Commitment makers/leaders of the AC GBV that are doing the most groundbreaking work on prevention will be invited to share their expertise on what works and what they are investing in and why.

SEGMENT 3: BEST PRACTICES OF INVESTMENTS TO PREVENT VAW, GAPS AND CHALLENGES, AND THE WAY FORWARD

An engaging roundtable discussion will share new cutting-edge data from the GBV Prevention Accelerator, a collective commitment to the Generation Equality Action Coalition on GBV, on the investment gaps, challenges and opportunities to strengthen investments on VAWG. The panel will highlight key investment models for prevention of violence against

³ ILO Convention 190 (www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_721160.pdf) is the first international treaty to recognize the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment.



women, including through multi-sectoral National Action Plans, multilateral development banks, official development assistance and private sector investments.

SEGMENT 4: CALL TO ACTION AND CLOSING

Existing and new commitment makers and leaders of the AC GBV will share their groundbreaking and catalytic commitments and will be followed by a strong call to action based on the advocacy priorities of the AC GBV leadership group and the findings /gaps highlighted in the Generation Equality Accountability report on the AC GBV with a view to attracting even more commitment makers throughout the 16 days.

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

Annex 1: Concept Note UNiTE Theme: Invest to Prevent Violence against Women & Girls!

Available in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [Arabic](#)

Annex 2: [Campaign Announcer and Call to Action](#)

Annex 3: [Updated ERAW Facts and Figures](#)

Annex 3: Key messages

*****Forthcoming: Agenda, List of speakers/participants, Run of show*****

*****Forthcoming: Engagement Strategy and Communications Plan *****