

Concept Note

Regional Curated Dialogue: *Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!* Asia Pacific launch of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

- Session recording: Monday, 23 November, 9 am - 11:00 am **Bangkok time, C ASEAN Media Hub**
- Event will be aired live on **Wednesday, 25 November, at 2 pm Bangkok time** - Livestreamed on Facebook (<https://fb.me/e/1J6pfhhHQ>)

Background and 2020 context

Even in “normal” times, women in the Asia-Pacific region experience high levels of violence. About 37 percent of women in South Asia, 40 per cent in South-East Asia, and 68 per cent in the Pacific say they have suffered abuse by their intimate partners, according to World Health Organization research.¹

In 2020, with the COVID-19 outbreak and declaration of it as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), the world has witnessed the escalation of violence against women and girls (VAWG), and particularly domestic violence. With the pandemic, there has been an increased reporting of violence against women in many countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated key risk factors for VAWG, such as food shortages, unemployment, economic insecurity, school closures, and massive migration flows. There has been an alarming increase in multiple forms of violence against women and girls, especially physical, psychological, sexual and economic forms of domestic violence fueled by household economic and food insecurity and confined living conditions due to lockdown and social isolation measures. There are also reports of increased sexual abuse and harassment, both online and offline, and in some settings, an increase in femicides.

Quarantines and social isolation have negatively influenced mental health, increasing the risk of problematic coping behaviors including family violence and conflict.² Limited physical mobility, suspended public transport, and closed or stretched capacity of support services (i.e. shelters, crisis centers, legal aid, sexual and reproductive health services) has hindered the ability of VAWG survivors to access support including first medical aid, justice, health care, psycho-social care and social protection.³ Shelters and support centers for VAWG survivors are closed

¹ Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, p. 16, World Health Organization, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and South African Medical Research Council, 2013.

² Amber Peterman, Alina Potts, Megan O'Donnell, Kelly Thompson, Niyati Shah, Sabine Oertelt-Prigione, Nicole van GelderPaterman (Center for Global Development), Pandemics and Violence against Women and Children, (2020)

³ Amber Peterman, Alina Potts, Megan O'Donnell, Kelly Thompson, Niyati Shah, Sabine Oertelt-Prigione, Nicole van GelderPaterman (Center for Global Development), Pandemics and Violence against Women and Children, (2020)

or struggling to procure food, maintain hygiene and health care necessary to take cases.⁴ Women and girls may assume closure of services means services for violence are not open and being on lockdown with perpetrators can make them feel unsafe to seek help, leading to an under-reporting of violence to formal authorities. Given the existing gender digital divide, women and girls in many countries may not have access to mobile phones, computers, or the Internet to access services to address VAWG and/or updated COVID-19 information.⁵ Perpetrators may use restrictions due to COVID-19 to exercise power and control over their partners to further reduce their access to services and support from formal and informal networks.⁶

Reported cases in Asia and the Pacific have been alarming:

- The hotline of the Women's Aid Organisation in Malaysia received 44 per cent more domestic violence calls in March, when the lockdown began, than in February.⁷
- In Singapore, AWARE's Women's Helpline received 33 per cent more violence-related calls in February 2020 compared to the same month last year.⁸
- In China, the national hotline of Yuanzhong Family and Community Development and Service Centre received 50 per cent more domestic violence complaints in February compared to the same month last year.⁹
- The Jakarta Legal Aid Foundation of the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice, which helps survivors of violence, recorded a tripling of reported cases after the lockdown began in March, in Indonesia.¹⁰
- In India, the number of domestic violence complaints received by the National Commission for Women more than doubled in four states in the north -- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana and Punjab -- during one period of the lockdown.¹¹
- In Australia, in a Women's Safety New South Wales survey in March, many front-line workers in the state said cases of violence not only have increased but have become more complex during the COVID-19 outbreak.¹²
- In the Republic of Korea, the police received 5 per cent fewer reports of domestic violence in March compared to the same month last year. But the Korea Women's Hotline said this could indicate women are in greater danger, confined with their abusers and finding it even more difficult to speak to counsellors.¹³

Violence against women is in the high focus of the governments and the United Nations. On 6 April 2020, the UN Secretary-General urged all governments 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 statement by 146

⁴ UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, A Bottom-up View of the Shadow Pandemic: Impact of COVID-19 on Violence Against Women Through the Lens of Civil Society and Women's Rights Organizations, (2020)

⁵ UN Women, COVID 19 and Ending Violence against Women and Girls, (2020)

⁶ WHO, COVID-19 and Violence against Women: What the Health Sector/System Can Do, (2020)

⁷ [Women's Aid Organisation Twitter post](#), 9 April 2020.

⁸ [Commentary: Isolated with your abuser? Why family violence seems to be on the rise during COVID-19 outbreak](#), Channel News Asia, 26 March 2020.

⁹ [Domestic violence reports rise in China amid COVID-19 lockdown](#), The Globe and Mail, 29 March 2020

¹⁰ [Jakarta records spike in domestic violence reports during work-from-home period](#), The Jakarta Post, 7 April 2020.

¹¹ [Domestic violence cases across India swell since coronavirus lockdown](#), Outlook, 7 April 2020.

¹² [Domestic violence spikes during coronavirus as families trapped at home](#), 10 Daily, 27 March 2020

¹³ [Has COVID-19 really decreased domestic violence?](#), Sisa (in Korean), 20 April 2020.

Member States and Observers that expressed strong support.

Given the growing urgency of addressing violence against women and girls in the context of COVID-19, and considering the context of escalating reports globally, the UN Secretary General developed a political engagement strategy for senior leadership to engage influencers at all levels, and mobilize the social and cultural shift necessary to tackle VAWG.

The year 2020 is an important milestone for the issue of gender equality and work on preventing and ending violence against women and girls, as we are marking 25 years of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action. On the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN Women's "Generation Equality: Realizing women's rights for an equal future" campaign demands equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, an end to sexual harassment and violence against women and girls, health care services that respond to their needs, and their equal participation in political life and in decision-making in all areas of life.

In support of the Generation Equality global campaign, UN Women is pursuing the endeavour of building Action Coalitions to mobilize stakeholders from different sectors of life (public, private and third sector) to engage in active partnerships to accelerate the progress towards the achievement of 2030 SDG agenda and build a gender equal society.

The UN Political Engagement Strategy platform aims to be the primary driver of the UN for coherent messaging, uniting our efforts, aligning actors on exemplars of concrete policy change, and it can be adapted to contextual realities and imperatives.

The overall UNiTE campaign activities will be thus framed under the conceptual framework of the UN Political Engagement Strategy, outlining the following advocacy focus:

- **FUND**
 - ✓ Prioritize funding for a minimum package of essential services that include GBV prevention in COVID-19 fiscal stimulus packages.
 - ✓ Make flexible funding available for women's rights organizations working at the nexus of COVID-19 and GBV
 - ✓ Ensure GBV incorporated into financing of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan & UN Socio-Economic Impact Framework
- **PREVENT**
 - ✓ Declare a national zero tolerance policy for GBV with a concrete action plan in place.
 - ✓ Launch a COVID-19 behavior change social mobilization campaign
- **RESPOND**
 - ✓ Undertake explicit measures so that services for survivors of GBV are maintained as essential during COVID-19 lockdowns, including ensuring a continuum of adequate criminal justice response.
 - ✓ Ensure minimum essential services are maintained and adopted where they are non-existent.
- **COLLECT**
 - ✓ Collect data for improvement of GBV services and programs (always ensuring survivor-centered and ethical safety standards)

The 2020 theme

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign which takes place each year. It commences on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and continues until 10 December, Human Rights Day. It was originated by activists at the first [Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991](#) and is coordinated each year by the [Center for Women's Global Leadership](#). It is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

In support of this civil society initiative, under the leadership of the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, the [United Nations Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women Campaign](#) (UNiTE) calls for global action to increase awareness, galvanise advocacy efforts and the sharing of knowledge and innovations.

The UN System's 16 Days of Activism activities will begin on 25th November under our 2020 global theme, aligning with the UN Political Engagement Strategy: **Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!**

UNiTE Asia and the Pacific activities

UNiTE Inter-agency group will host several activities. The main event will be **Regional Curated Dialogue** on Ending Violence against Women during COVID-19.

A regional curated meeting will take place as a **hybrid event** (virtual and face-to-face dialogues) on 25 November 2020. With Members States, CSOs, media, youth and other stakeholders present, this will present an unprecedented opportunity to emphasize the status quo on ERAW in the light of COVID-19, discuss unfinished business in the area of ending violence against women and galvanize commitments from members states and other participants to accelerate action on ending violence against women and girls through an engaging event.

The Regional Curated Dialogue will showcase promising practices, provide the opportunity to listen to frontline service providers and civil society actors, and to share strategies and insights on delivering concrete results through policy responses on VAWG and COVID-19.

The event is currently envisioned to be livestreamed in the format of a TV programme. Hosted and moderated by Cindy Sirinya Bishop, UN Women's newly appointed Regional Goodwill Ambassador for Asia and the Pacific, the meeting will feature civil society and youth voices, government commitments, a musical performance and include **pre-recorded** and **live interventions**. This session is designed to start with hearing from activists and frontline service providers and for the UN and government to listen to them first and then respond and provide their own interventions. The Handover the Mic element will be integrated to present a variety of voices and inter-generational exchange.

Agenda:

***NOTE to speakers- the campaign color is orange- please wear orange!**

****Timing is Bangkok Time (ICT)**

Time Schedule	Activity	Time Allotted
0830-09.00	Sound and video check by <i>production team</i> All speakers log in using their respective zoom/google meet link	
09:00 - 09:05	Opening remarks - Moderator Cindy Bishop	5 mins
09:05 - 09:20	<p>[SESSION 1]: Discuss the current situation of GBV in the Asia Pacific Region during Covid-19 along with high level commitments to address the issue.]</p> <p><i>Ms Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</i></p> <p>(Question 1) “Why is gender-based violence getting so much attention in the context of COVID-19? What is the connection between gender-based violence and the economic impacts of COVID-19? Why has the UN Secretary-General made repeated calls for accelerated and concrete action to address gender-based violence right now?</p> <p>(Question 2) Given these extraordinary circumstances, the UN SG is calling for the UN system to work together to address gender-based violence. What actions do you see as critical to be effective in reducing gender-based violence? And what is your commitment to address violence against women?</p> <p><i>Video Message:</i> <i>His Excellency Mr. Kung Phoak, Deputy Secretary-General, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community</i></p>	15 mins
09:20 - 09:23	<i>Musical Interlude - June-Chanakarn Wisuk Cho, Violinist</i>	3 min
09:23 -10:03	<p>[SESSION 2: Listening session to hear from frontline providers, civil society organisations, activists on four advocacy points of the SG’s Political Engagement Strategy (Fund, Prevent, Respond, Collect).]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dr Aparna Joshi, Founder and Project Director, iCALL, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India ● Dr. Emma Fulu, Founder and Director, The Equality Institute, Australia ● Ms. Khawar Mumtaz, Former Chairperson, National Commission on Status of Women, Pakistan ● Ms Jelen Paclarin, Executive Director of the Women’s Legal Bureau, Philippines 	40 mins

	Second Round- one-minute reactions to the other panelists	
10:03 - 10:33	Session 3: Priorities and commitments related to areas of Fund, Prevent, Respond, Collect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms. Julie-Ann Guivarra, Australian Ambassador for Gender Equality ● Mr. Björn Andersson, Regional Director, UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office ● Mr. Mohammad Naciri, Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific ● Video Message: Ms Fabienne Van Den Eede, Deputy Head of Unit “Human Rights, Democracy and Gender Equality”, European Commission (5 mins-video) 	30 mins
10:33 - 10:38	Session 3 Cont... <p><i>“What is the main commitment you are making to end gender-based violence in the context of COVID, and what do you encourage other leaders to commit to?”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms. Julie-Ann Guivarra, Australian Ambassador for Gender Equality ● Mr. Björn Andersson, Regional Director, UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office ● Mr. Mohammad Naciri, Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific 	3 mins
10:38 -10:43	Video montage	5 mins
10:43-10.45	Closing Remarks	2 mins