



International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women

Remarks by Mme Letty Chiwara

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Addis Ababa

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UN Resident Coordinator

Colleagues - UN Heads of Agencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to be here with you today to commemorate the International Day to eliminate violence against women and to commence the 16 days of activism.

The 16 days of activism global initiative marks the solidarity between women and men to stop violence against women and to take concrete action to fulfil the pledges made to eliminate violence against women.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work, commitment, financial and technical support provided by the UN Communication Group, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, UN Women, and other UN agencies. By working together to Deliver as One, these agencies were able to ensure that we could be gathered here today to commemorate this important day.

The theme of this year's UN worldwide event is "Orange Your Neighborhood: End Violence against Women Now", which emphasizes engagement with local communities in order to end violence against women. In order to engage with our local community and raise awareness about violence against women, UN Women along with other UN agencies will be distributing orange t-shirts and car stickers to the surrounding community. We hope that by 'orangeing' Kazanchis area we can add to the global efforts to raise awareness about Violence against women.

Violence against women is a major obstacle in our fight against poverty and inequality and a threat to lasting peace and development. It reduces productivity, drains public budgets, fuels the HIV and AIDS pandemic and has a long-lasting intergenerational impact.

Studies have shown that 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced sexual violence ([According to a 2013 global review of available data](#)), that's one in every three women. In Ethiopia alone, 71% of women have reported physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime ([WHO, November 2014](#)).

Women are being harassed in the workplace, abused on the streets and beaten in their own homes. These women are our mothers, daughters, sisters and friends. These women are likely to even be seated amongst us today. Violence against women is an intolerable violation of human rights and we must fight to end it.

[\[Human interest story from Mrs. Letty, DEBORA story If you wish\]](#)

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a relief to know that various measures have been taken at the UN country team level. These measures include but is not limited to the adoption of Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) by 189 governments 20 years ago and the recent adoption of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Accelerating the Implementation of the BPfA, which spells out key strategies to end violence against women, empower women, and achieve gender equality.

This includes prevention strategies that address the root causes of gender inequality, services for women surviving violence, such as:

Hotlines – shelters -legal advice- access to justice –counselling- police protection- health services and better data collection.

It also envisaged having more men champions and boys standing up against violence, denouncing it, and stopping it.

20 years on African governments have affirmed the relevance of the BPfA with their adoption of the Addis Ababa Declaration. Governments have undertaken to strengthen the enforcement of VAW laws, invest in Gender Based Violence monitoring mechanisms and the collection of gender disaggregated data on VAW and to strengthen the men’s movement to promote the gender equality agenda.

Despite interventions, a lot more needs to be done in terms of providing legal protection and essential services to victims of violence. This means that we need to take long-term, systemic

and comprehensive approaches that recognizes and protects women's full and equal human rights.

Ladies –

Gentlemen -

We need to act – and put our foot down !

We need to end

- 1. Impunity**
- 2. Violence**
- 3. And assure provision of service to survivors of violence**

Given that violence cuts across and intersects with other areas of concern such as poverty, health and women's economic empowerment, these approaches must adopt a multi sectoral response to gender based violence. A woman who is victim of gender based violence **must and should** have access to quality services including treatment to prevent HIV, unintended pregnancies, counseling and shelter so that she can be safe. **She must have access to justice.**

These responses must be timely and efficient to end a culture of impunity and foster a culture of justice and support. It is also important that adolescent boys are taught in school that coercion, violence and discrimination against girls is **unacceptable.**

We need to commit, Act and Demand to end horrible abuses and impunities which lead to the suffering of humanity. Now is the time for stronger action. If violence against women is not addressed properly, it poses serious consequences for the current and future generations.

{ our poor sister and daughter Hanna endured a horrendous and unimaginable crime here in our city just last week, we were all touched and disturbed by her story.

During the 16 days of activism and beyond, I call and urge you to mobilize and act and stand against violence on our women and girls. }

It is the responsibility of each of us to act against gender based violence which continues to affect both men and women. Violence is not just a women's issue, it is an issue of our societies and it goes beyond/ cuts across colour, race, nationality and sex divisions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UN Women is striving to avert violence against women and girls. UN Women Ethiopia in particular made ending violence against women one of its key priority areas. Through this programme, we support the development of laws, national action plans and policies, and training programmes. We work with NGOs and civil societies, contribute to advocacy and awareness-raising efforts, and support local initiatives. [We also administer global programme such as the Secretary-General's UNiTE Campaign to End Violence against Women which envisages through strong advocacy, campaign and Say NO – UNiTE social media platforms to mobilize communities across the globe. Globally, UN Women has launched the HeForShe campaign to engage men and boys as advocates and agents of change for the achievement of gender equality and women's rights.](#)

Dear Colleagues, ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, I would like to seize this opportunity to call upon you all to join us in working towards the elimination of Gender Based Violence, the end of impunity for perpetrators of violence and the strengthening of service provision to survivors of violence.

Let your voice be heard!

Thank you!