



**Orange Day, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

**Violence Against Women and Girls and Women's Economic Empowerment**

## **BACKGROUND**

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.

In 2015, a new global development agenda was accepted by all countries and is applicable to all. Through its 17 goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an agenda for global action for the next 15 years, addresses the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social, and environmental. The Agenda recognizes gender equality and the empowerment of women as a key priority and pledges that "no one will be left behind."

Goal 5 of the agenda aims to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" and includes specific targets to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. However, all goals are integrated and indivisible, therefore their achievement is also fully dependent on ensuring parallel and interconnected implementation of the efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls.

For this reason, throughout 2017 and through its Orange Days, the UNiTE campaign will continue to highlight specific Sustainable Development Goals as they relate to violence against women and girls.

## ORANGE DAY

This Orange Day, 25 February, and in the lead up to the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women which will be held under the theme “*Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work*” from 13 to 24 March 2017 in New York, the UNiTE campaign is highlighting again the **linkage between Violence Against Women and Girls and Women’s Economic Empowerment** by highlighting ***Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full employment and decent work for all.***

Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies promoting economic growth, employment, and decent work for all as a key step towards sustainable development. A target to support the achievement of this goal is to promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious positions of employment. This includes ensuring that women are able to travel to work, and go about their work without violence, or the fear of it.

Violence against women in the work place takes place in all countries throughout the world and takes many forms, including sexual harassment and bullying. Violence against women at work has serious and immediate consequences for those who are directly affected by it and it can also have wider reaching effects on their ability to earn a livelihood, support their family, achieve economic empowerment, and access other rights. It also comes at a cost to organizations, causing absenteeism, increased staff turnover, and resulting in reduced productivity.

Millions of women throughout the world are employed by businesses under informal, and therefore, unregulated conditions, or work in informal sectors of the economy as domestic workers, waste pickers, street vendors, and in other roles. Women and girls working in the informal economy are particularly at risk from exploitation and abuse. The informal nature of their working environments means that it is likely that neither zero-tolerance policies towards all

forms of violence at work, nor mechanisms by which to such report violence, are in place. In addition to the role of governments in ensuring appropriate laws and policies are in place, the corporate sector has an important role to play in efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls given that it employs millions of women and girls and holds vast potential in offering opportunities for the enhancement of gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

The [Women's Empowerment Principles](#) are the result of collaboration between UN Women and the UN Global Compact. They offer businesses guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace, and communities and contain specific recommendations on "Health, Safety and Freedom from Violence." Supporting and implementing these principles is a major step for businesses in ensuring that their work places are safe for women.

#### **EXAMPLES OF SOME RELEVANT PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS:**

- **UN Women's** Global Flagship Initiative, ["Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces,"](#) is the first-ever global programme that develops, implements, and evaluates tools, policies, and comprehensive approaches on the prevention of and response to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls across various public settings.
  - The path to economic empowerment for Afghan women in particular remains riddled with discrimination, violence, and unequal access to opportunities. The biggest hurdle they face are negative perceptions and stereotypes about their ability to be equally valuable members of the workforce. A [programme by UN Women](#) provides skills training and internship opportunities to young women graduates to kick-start their careers.
- In seven countries worldwide, the **World Food Programme's** efforts to empower rural women are being strengthened through a **joint UN project with UN Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development**. The [programme](#) aims to empower rural women, in particular by improving their food and

nutrition security, *increasing their incomes, enhancing their decision-making power, and encouraging policy environments that are conducive to their economic empowerment.*

- One [example comes from Kyrgyzstan](#) where the women's groups asked for support to change the public perception of child marriages. These women's groups found that when girls are not forced to marry, they have more opportunities to improve their education, engage in paid work, earn more, and become financially independent.
- **The International Labour Organization's (ILO) [S4YE is a multi-stakeholder coalition](#)** of public sector, private sector, and civil society actors which aims to increase the number of youth engaged in productive work around the world. The initiative especially focuses on regions suffering from high youth unemployment and on where the inclusion of vulnerable youth, in particular girls and young women, presents a challenge.
- The **International Trade Center (ITC)** supports women traders in Eastern and Southern Africa to move from the informal to the formal sector, increasing their earnings and reducing their risk of suffering violence. [Read](#) how one Burundian woman becomes a formal trader through ITC-led training, opening the path to higher incomes and safer working conditions.

#### **TAKE ACTION THIS ORANGE DAY!**

- **Wear orange** to work on 25 February to show your support for a world of work free from violence. Share your orange photos [@SayNo\\_UNiTE](#)
- **Host a brownbag lunch at work** to explore the links between violence against women and how its various forms can prevent women and girls from achieving their economic independence. Invite civil society organizations to participate.
- **Inform yourself** about mechanisms to report violence at the workplace in your organization!
- **Human Resource Specialists?** Learn about the links between violence against women and women's economic empowerment and how this should be taken into account in your organization [here](#).

- Join the [empowerwomen.org](http://empowerwomen.org) community and take advantage of free resources and webinars such as [Leveraging Technologies for Women's Economic Empowerment](#)

## USEFUL RESOURCES

- The [“Leave no one behind – A call to action for gender equality and women’s economic empowerment”](#) report of the United Nation’s Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment
- The [Addis Ababa Action Agenda \(AAAA\)](#) – see initiative on Mainstreaming women’s empowerment into financing for development
- [ILO Report “Women at Work 2016”](#) and the [ILO Background Paper on violence against Women and Men in the World of Work](#)

## SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

### TWITTER

It's the first #OrangeDay of 2017! Wear orange & say NO to violence against women & girls  
<http://bit.ly/1fXiNmW> v @SayNO\_UNiTE

This #OrangeDay, find out more how #VAW and #womenseconomicempowerment are linked:  
<http://bit.ly/1fXiNmW> @SayNO\_UNiTE

This #OrangeDay find out why economic empowerment is key to reducing violence against women  
<http://bit.ly/1fXiNmW> @SayNO\_UNiTE

Find out how widows, single moms & survivors of violence in Timor-Leste are gaining economic independence  
<http://bit.ly/2lri4pz> #OrangeDay

To kick-start their careers, Afghan women need to change negative perceptions and stereotypes  
<http://bit.ly/2bbPGn7> #OrangeDay

## **FACEBOOK 1**

This month, the UNiTE campaign takes a closer look at how violence against women and women's economic empowerment are linked. [Find out more](#) about how widows, single moms, and survivors of violence in rural Timor-Leste are gaining economic independence through self-help groups, grants, and gardens. <http://unwo.men/Zaat3095esK> v [@SayNO-UNiTE to End Violence against Women] #OrangeDay

## **FACEBOOK 2**

The path to economic empowerment for Afghan women remains riddled with discrimination, violence, and unequal access to opportunities. The biggest hurdle they face are negative perceptions and stereotypes. A programme by [@UN Women] provides skills training and internship opportunities to young female graduates to kick-start their careers. Learn more: <http://unwo.men/J6yt3095evG> v [@SayNO-UNiTE to End Violence against Women] #OrangeDay