

CALL FOR ACTION

to Reduce the Cost of Violence against Women

The Call for Action to Reduce the Cost of Violence against Women was issued on 22 November 2016 by the President of the Republic of Lithuania H.E. Dalia Grybauskaitė and the President of the Republic of Chile H.E. Michelle Bachelet.

It was inspired by the high-level discussion of a distinguished group of Heads of State and International Organizations, which took place on 21 September 2016 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Expressing grave concern that one in three women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes, that domestic and intimate partner violence causes more deaths than homicides or civil wars, and stressing that in addition to being a grave human rights violation and one of the worst forms of discrimination, violence against women is also a serious drain on economic resources,

Emphasizing that the cost of violence against women could amount to around two percent of the gross domestic product,

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Recognizing that violence against women occurs in every country, rich or poor, developed or developing, at times of conflict or in peacetime, and in both public or private spheres,

Affirming that direct costs of violence against women, such as expenses for the health system, counselling, justice system, child and welfare support, are only part of what societies pay for violence against women, because violence also has indirect costs, such as lost wages, productivity and potential, as well as long-term psychological effects,

Underlining that violence against women is a serious obstacle to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in particular reaching Sustainable Development Goal 5 that aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls,

Noting with concern that the response to violence against women to date has focused primarily on intervening after the violence has occurred and stressing that greater resources should be dedicated to timely prevention and addressing the root causes, such as gender inequality, discrimination and gender stereotypes,

Underscoring that establishing the cost of violence against women is a powerful tool for advocacy and action aimed at supporting women, preventing abuse and ensuring accountability of perpetrators,

Having brought together a group of Heads of State and International Organizations as well as distinguished experts at the High-Level Discussion on the Economic Cost of Violence Against Women, which took place on 21 September 2016 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York,

We urgently call to:

1. Redouble efforts to combat and eliminate all forms of violence against women, including femicide (gender-related killing of women and girls), that impedes the full achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and has enormous negative economic impact on women, their families and entire societies, as well as on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular Sustainable Goal 5, as well as other targets on health and well-being, quality education, decent work and economic growth;
2. Recognise that establishing the economic cost of violence against women is yet another compelling argument for drawing attention and taking action against this grave violation of human rights and should be used as a tool to bridge the gap between declarations and real actions on the ground aimed at reducing and eliminating violence against women;
3. Emphasize that the high cost of violence against women should under no circumstances become a justification to reduce resources, but should serve as a catalyst to increase spending that would contribute to its effective elimination;
4. Strengthen the focus on preventing violence against women and recognise that establishing the cost of such violence is instrumental in exposing the cost of inaction;
5. Conduct national and regional studies that estimate the cost of violence against women to the respective economies and encourage states to use the results of such surveys to adopt, fine-tune and monitor the implementation of relevant legislation and policies;
6. Ensure that comprehensive, comparable and high quality statistical data are available globally to demonstrate the magnitude and scope of damage caused to individuals, families and societies;
7. Improve the sharing of and adopting of good practices at a local, national, regional and international levels, aimed at combatting violence against women;
8. Step up the efforts of all stake-holders, including national governments, members of parliaments, international and regional organizations, civil society and academia, to raise awareness of the urgent need to reduce the cost of violence against women.

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