



## Governments Eliminating Violence: Time to Stand Up Not Stand By

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Soroptimist International and World YWCA, representing the voices of girls, young women and women from all corners of the globe, call upon governments and the international community to recognize that the full extent of the commitments in CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the agreed conclusions from the 51<sup>st</sup> session of CSW have not been realised. We call upon governments to increase political will and investment in girl-centred policies and programmes to eliminate violence. Allowing violence against girls to continue, in the public or private sphere, is a violation of human rights. Systemic and individual acts of violence against girls and young women denies them an education, undermines their self-esteem, increases their risk of contracting HIV, and puts them at further risk of trauma and long-term physical and psychological damage. Further and immediate action is critical to ensuring that girls and young women can exercise their rights, grow up in a safe and enabling environment, and become leaders and decision-makers in communities and at all levels. Governments are obligated to prevent violence against girls from occurring, to protect girls that have already been victim/survivors of violence, and to ensure that gender and age sensitive legislation and enforcement mechanisms are in place.

To enable girls and young women to claim their right to a life free from violence, we call on governments to take immediate action to:

- Understand and respond to the fact that women and girls are not a homogenous category and experience violence in many different ways, based on geographic, political, economic, social, and cultural contexts and backgrounds;



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- Invest in the primary prevention of violence against girls and young women by equipping all young people – both girls and boys - with the tools to recognize violence, to negotiate healthy respectful relationships, and to understand that everyone has the right to live a life free from violence;
- In partnership with girls and young women and civil society, ensure that programmes and services are both gender and age appropriate, especially in providing access to girl-friendly safe spaces;
- Strengthen legal frameworks and systems of justice to be responsive to the unique needs of girls and women, and, where necessary, enact and enforce new laws to prevent, prosecute and punish all cases of violence against girls and young women;
- Ensure that robust systems are in place to collect, analyse, and act upon data on violence against girls and young women;
- Develop and implement adequately-funded, long-term, comprehensive National Action Plans on Violence Against Women and Girls which pay particular attention to and are developed in consultation with girls and young women; and
- Invest in and prioritize accessible, acceptable, available, and good quality education and training, both formal and non-formal, for girls, boys, adult women, and adult men, as key to achieving gender equality and eliminating violence against girls and young women.



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By empowering girls and boys, young women and young men as agents of change, governments can take the crucial steps immediately needed to prevent violence against girls, to protect victim/survivors, to prosecute perpetrators, and to enforce legislation to eliminate further acts of violence. We call upon governments to listen to the young women leaders of today and to unite with us to eliminate violence against girls. Together, we are stronger than we are alone.