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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[3 February 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



High Time to Stand United Against Violence Against Women and Children Globally

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises violence as, “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, or deprivation”.

Violence in general against anyone is morally wrong and nothing can ever justify it, however violence especially against women and children is of utmost public concern that can have long lasting consequences on our society. Compared to grown up male counterparts, women and children are more prone to violence and victimisation as many-a-times their opportunities and rights are ignored or overlooked, and they lack readily available means of protection. Across the continents, there are certain areas where some form of violence or the other against women is socially acceptable, thereby pushing them more towards danger.

The impacts that certain forms of violence creates on the minds of women and specially children can last for a long period of time, which may even stretch to a lifetime. Studies conducted by various human rights groups across the globe have presented a data according to which, children who have witnessed, or been subjected to violence are more likely to become abusers themselves.

According to the available data from the past decade, crimes against children tripled in that given time frame and more than 80% crimes were recorded under two heads, kidnapping and sexual abuse. Around the same time duration, crime against women more than doubled, and in this case majority of crimes were reported under, “kidnapping, assault with an intent to outrage her modesty and rape”. Moreover, victims of certain crimes worldwide quite often due to societal pressure or otherwise hesitate to report their sufferings.

The sufferings that women and children globally go through can be estimated if we take a look at some certain data:

- Nearly one-fourth of all the children have faced gender-based violence by the age of 19 either at their school or certain public places.
- Nearly a quarter of all girls worldwide have faced violence, gender-based or otherwise by the time they cross the age of 20, if they have been in a partner relationship.
- UN Women has pointed out that women in those classified as “least developed countries” have been subjected to a substantially higher rate of violence in the past year- a staggering 13% higher.
- Violence against children includes all forms of violence against people under 18 years of age, whether perpetrated by parents or other caregivers, peers or strangers.
- Globally, it is estimated that up to 1 billion children aged 2-17 years, have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect in the past year.
- Target 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development is to “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against, and torture of children”.
- Studies show that one in four young women (aged 15-24 years), who have been in a relationship, will have already experienced violence by their partner, by the time they reach their mid-twenties.
- Less than 40 % of women who experience violence seek help of any sort. In the majority of countries with available data on this issue, among women who do seek help, most often look to family and friends. Very few look forward to formal institutions, less than 10 % of those seeking help appealed to the police.

These data represent just a glimpse of what the actual scenario looks like. And it can be concluded that violence against women and children is common and universal.

There are also instances where violence led to severe health and social harm, with massive cost to the victims thereby placing burden on health, justice and social welfare systems. If

these problems aren't taken care of soon, then it has the potential to constrain national development goals, which is already hampered by the impacts of Covid-19.

Prevention of these atrocities can start at the grassroots level, knowledge of shared risk factors and social norms, emerging evidence of the effectiveness of coordinated approaches for prevention and common pathways for response can help pave the way for effective action against such crimes.

The regional offices of the UNFPA, the UN Women and the UNICEF have launched a joint study exploring and clearly illustrating the links between violence against women and violence against children in 4 countries – Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Viet Nam. Worldwide, around 150+ countries have passed laws on domestic violence and more than 130 countries have legislation on sexual harassment at the workplace. But challenges remain in implementing these rulings, limiting women and girls' access to safer environment and justice.

Several organisations like the UN Women have come forward for advocating and supporting women and children access to quality, multi-sectoral services essential for their safety, protection and recovery, especially for those who already suffer multiple forms of discrimination. Furthermore, they have partnered with governments across the globe, UN Agencies, civil society organisations and other institutions to find ways to prevent violence against women and girls, focussing early education, and respectful relationships. Prevention is still the most effective, long term way to stop violence. For more than 10 years, UN Women's global initiative, Safe cities and Safe Public Spaces, has worked to prevent and respond to sexual harassment against women and children in public spaces, and since 2017 they have deployed targeted large scale investment in ending violence in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific.

Safety of women and children globally cannot be ensured with just having rules and regulations. Every nation need to implement zero tolerance for violence against women and children, as women and children are at risk with gaps in infrastructure, processes and systems as well as people.
