

Opening Ceremony for the 16 days Campaign

Addressing the Crossroads of GBV, Agriculture, and Food Security

Concept Note

28 November 2023 14:30 – 16:00 CET

Introduction:

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is an annual international campaign that commences on the 25th of November (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) and concludes on the 10th of December (Human Rights Day). Since its inception in 1991 by the first Women's Global Leadership Institute, the campaign has been a beacon of hope and raising awareness about gender-based violence as a pervasive human rights issue at local, national, regional, and international scales.

The UNiTE campaign for 2023 centers on the theme "Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women & Girls" focusing on the importance of financing strategies and mechanisms to prevent the occurrence of Gender Based Violence. This theme is also aligned to the 2024 priority theme of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which focuses on accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective."

The campaign will also promote and amplify the commitments and efforts to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG). This includes the implementation of the newly approved Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). Additionally, it will actively participate in the Generation Equality Forum, the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and the Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights (EJR) to support these commitments. Furthermore, the campaign will act as a catalyst for global advocacy platforms, such as the Generation Equality midpoint moment and the SDG midpoint summit, both scheduled for September 2023.

Background:

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a profound violation of human rights that transcends personal boundaries, affecting broader societal structures, economies, and nations. The physical or psychological effect of GBV have a devastating impact on agricultural productivity, food and nutrition security. It reduces on- and off-farm capacity, restricts access to extension and community support, increases household costs and prevents participation in economic and social spaces such as markets, community enterprises, savings and loan groups.

All of this hinders a sustainable response to threatened livelihood and increased poverty levels. Emerging evidence suggests that food insecurity and GBV have a strong causal reinforcing relationship; hunger, stress, insecurity, income volatility, displacement or changing environments can

lead to violence or push some households to adopt harmful coping strategies such as child, early or forced marriage, or increased reliance on work that exposes women and girls to sexual exploitation and abuse. The gendered effects of climate change can also increase women's risk of experiencing GBV, by increasing the time and distances required to undertake firewood collection and food cultivation.

Addressing GBV is not only a human right obligation of all UN agencies and related operations but is also a necessity for progress towards Zero Hunger. Addressing GBV requires the food security and agricultural sector to take action to do no harm (risk mitigation), provide appropriate linkages for GBV response (referrals), and to address the root cause of GBV (gender inequality). Investments in reducing food and agricultural insecurity through a gender lens is also an essential way to contribute to the **prevention of gender-based violence**. The RBAs are committed to ensuring that we work in coordination and continue to use our global platforms to ending GBV through encouraging progress towards gender equality outcomes and ensuring that our operational presence is protective and mitigates from exposure to GBV.

Key Messages:

- Gender-based violence is not just a personal tragedy; it undermines the empowerment of women and girls across agrifood systems, limiting their access to resources, services, economic opportunities, and reducing their decision-making power.
- Globally, 1 in 3 women have been subjected to gender-based violence. Violence against women is estimated to cost USD 1.5 trillion annually.
- Recent global crises and the COVID-19 pandemic have further increased violence against women and girls, jeopardizing their lives, livelihoods, food security and nutrition.
- It is crucial to engage men and boys as allies and agents of change in their community; they are often the gatekeepers in household and community leadership roles.
- Food security and agricultural operations require the equal engagement of women and girls to mitigate the risk that interventions increase gender-based violence.
- We must collectively address the root causes of gender-based violence to eradicate food insecurity, malnutrition, and rural poverty. FAO, IFAD, and WFP have zero-tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse and actively work to prevent and mitigate the risk of gender-based violence.

Objective:

To highlight the detrimental impact of GBV on agricultural production, food security, and its contribution to poverty, emphasizing the importance of addressing GBV within the mandate of IFAD, FAO, and WFP.

Registration

Zoom Link <https://bit.ly/STOPViolenceAgainstWomenandGirls>

