

Session Overview

Susan Myers, UN Foundation Senior Vice President, and Erin Kenny, Head of Technical Unit and Senior Technical Advisor to the Spotlight Initiative, will lead a discussion on ending violence against women and girls, and the role of the Spotlight Initiative, the global and multi-year effort initiated by the EU and UN and launched in 2017. The dialogue will include a conversation about the Spotlight approach and the need to engage governments and the private sector in ending violence against women through increasing investment, changing policy and social norms, improving the depiction of girls and women in media, and creating safer, more equal work places. This conversation will also highlight positive and negative impacts of digitalization, including how digitalization has given girls and women connection and a common global language (#MeToo), yet also allows for anonymous misogyny to flourish.

Key Outcomes of Discussion

- Participants will gain a better understanding of the Spotlight Initiative, and how the UN and its partners are working to end violence against women and girls everywhere.
- Participants will also gain insight on advocacy efforts, and the ways in which they can engage governments, organizations, and communities to ensure their policies and practices are inclusive of all women and girls.
- This conversation will foster a broader dialogue for future global events, including various days of activism and International Women's Day.

Relevant Links/Information

The Spotlight Initiative

- Launched in September 2017, the Spotlight Initiative aims to eliminate violence against women and girls. It is a multi-year partnership of the European Union and the UN, named for the focused attention it will bring to all forms of violence against women and girls, specifically trafficking, sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence, and femicide. This initiative will be implemented in a focused number of countries, with targeted investments aimed at achieving significant impact on the lives of women and girls.
- **#HerStoryOurStory:** As part of the Spotlight Initiative, the EU and UN has launched the digital campaign, #HerStoryOurStory - a joint campaign which aims to raise awareness of the prevalence and impact of violence against women and girls, while demonstrating that we all - collectively and individually - have a role to play in ending it. The campaign seeks to engage a broad international and local audience, using a web-based video game, which challenges players to consider how they would react when faced with a tricky situation. The campaign will highlight the themes prioritized in the Spotlight Initiative.
 - Visit www.herstoryourstory.net for more information, and to make the pledge to end violence against women and girls everywhere.

On **19 November 2018 Secretary-General** António Guterres provided remarks in advance of International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women:

- Violence against women is an issue of fundamental human rights
- VAGW is also deeply political, as we live in a male-dominated world. Women are made vulnerable to violence in many ways
- The UN has achieved parity in the senior management group and is well on track to reach gender parity in senior leadership by 2021, and across the board by 2028.
- The 500-million-euro EU-UN Spotlight Initiative is an important step forward in this direction. As the largest-ever single investment in eradicating violence against women and girls worldwide, this initial contribution will address the rights and needs of women and girls across 25 countries and five regions.
- Not until the half of our population represented by women and girls can live free of fear, violence and everyday insecurity, can we truly say we live in a fair and equal world.

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) : Facts and Figures

- VAWG is a one of the most widespread violation of human rights and it cuts across any age, socio-economic status, educational, political and geographical boundaries.
- VAWG is a major roadblock to gender equality and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- VAWG is a global issue that has short-term to long term effects impacting victims, their families, societies at the local and national level.
 - It has multiple health consequences (physical, sexual, mental) for girls and women,
 - It also has negative social and economic costs resulting from health care and legal expenses, losses in productivity and overall development – i.e. VAWG is estimated to cost countries up to 3.7% of their GDP ([World Bank](#))
- Globally, 1 in 3 (~33%) of women have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner (or non-partner) violence in their lifetime ([WHO](#))
- Of those women who are murdered globally, 38% of them are killed by their male intimate partners ([WHO](#))
- 7% of women globally have been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner ([World Bank](#))
- 200 million women alive today have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting ([WHO](#))
- 71% of women and girls globally are victims of human trafficking, with 3 out of every 4 sexually exploited ([UN Women](#))

The UN's Work to end VAWG

Through UN Women, the UN is combatting violence against girls and women in various ways:

- **Expanding access to Services:** UN Women, in partnership with UNFPA and other UN agencies, has developed the Essential Services Programme to improve the quality of and access to services by reaching a global understanding on the range of services and responses required and the corresponding standards for providing such services.
- **Safety in Public Spaces:** Through the [UN Safe Cities Initiative](#), the UN works to ensure all public and private spaces are safe for girls and women.

- **Improving Knowledge and Evidence:** The UN supports the Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls which features guidance on how to implement laws, policies, and effective programming tools from around the world.
- **Supporting innovative approaches to ending violence:** UN Women manages the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women on behalf of the UN System to provide support to innovative approaches to stem and prevent the pandemic of violence. Since its inception, the fund has provided grants to 426 initiatives in 136 countries, amounting to a total of USD 116 million.
- **Advocacy:** UN Women manages [UNiTE to end violence against women](#), which has various advocacy activities to bring awareness to ending gender-based violence.
- **Education for prevention:** Putting young people at the heart of prevention efforts, UN Women and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts have developed a non-formal curriculum to end violence against women and girls, designed for various age groups ranging from 5 to 25 years.