

Message from the Ambassador for Gender Equality Julie-Ann Guivarra  
and fellow Ambassadors from across the region to mark  
International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (IDEVAW)  
and the start of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence  
25 November 2020

Violence against women and girls is a violation of human rights. It is never acceptable.

It is a global issue that affects everyone. No country is immune.

Globally 243 million women and girls have been affected by sexual or physical violence in the last 12 months.

Gender-based violence has a profound and devastating impacts on individuals, communities and society as a whole

Costing countries billions of dollars each year in premature mortality, lost productivity, and health, social and legal costs<sup>1</sup>.

In 2020, we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary for the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

An important milestone for the issue of gender equality and efforts to end violence against women and girls.

Yet we find ourselves faced with a real threat to gender equality progress - COVID-19 has exacerbated gender inequalities

And globally, violence against women and girls has intensified.

Now more than ever, we need to work together to address and prevent violence against women and girls.

That's why we support this year's 16 Days of Activism and add our voices to calls to end gender-based violence through four actions: "Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect".

*[Fund:]* It is important we prioritise funding for essential services for survivors of gender-based violence, including women's rights organisations.

*[Respond:]* We need to ensure these essential services are prioritised and remain available, safe and accessible during the pandemic.

*[Prevent:]* We must work together to prevent gender-based violence before it occurs – to address gender inequality which is the root cause of violence against women and girls.

*[Collect:]* Ethical, reliable and comparable data is critical to effective approaches to ending gender-based violence and shining a light on the impact of this violence on everyone, everywhere.

This year, and every year, we say thank you to those working to eliminate violence against women and girls, as we stand together for gender equality.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank Group, 2017, <http://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/raising-awareness-root-out-violence-against-women-and-girls>