

Cairo, 9 December 2012 - UN Women, WHO, UNFPA and UNAIDS are fully committed to stopping violence against women and to ensuring the security, safety and dignity of women and girls regardless of where, when and how this violence is perpetrated.

UN Women, WHO, UNFPA and UNAIDS express particular concern about the high vulnerability of marginalized women, including young and adolescent girls, women with disabilities, women living with HIV and women in situations of conflict, who are frequent targets of violence.

Violence against women remains a socially accepted but hidden issue in many parts of the world including the Middle East and North Africa regions. This has major negative consequences for women and girls. We know that harmful social and cultural norms contribute to perpetuation of this problem. However, data on violence against women are unreliable and sometimes unavailable, particularly data on domestic violence and conflict-related sexual violence.

UN Women, WHO, UNFPA and UNAIDS urge governments, civil society and development partners to work together to break the silence around violence against women and to increase action that will protect women from violence and respond to their needs.

Together we can change harmful social behaviour and attitudes towards women and girls and promote norms, notions and the practice of equal rights.

Together we can end impunity for perpetrators of violence against women, including domestic violence and conflict-related sexual violence.

Together we can translate our commitments into action to end violence against women and girls in the region.

Today, we stand up with the women who have the courage to speak out and the men who are increasingly stepping up to counter the “epidemic” of violence against women.

This is an issue that affects all of society.

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