

Statement on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and launch of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence

25 November 2020, Kathmandu: Today, the United Nations in Nepal marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the launch of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, under the 2020 global theme: “Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!” On this day and the coming 16 days, individuals and organizations will shine a spotlight on all forms of violence against women and girls, and gender-based violence, speaking out to galvanize commitment and action to realize a world – and Nepal – where women and girls and all persons, irrespective of gender, can live a life free of violence and discrimination.

This annual international campaign takes place at a sombre time for the global community, amidst a pandemic that has exacerbated existing inequalities and disparities. We see a spike in violence against women and girls around the world – at exactly the time as resources have been diverted to the COVID-19 response and services have become scarcer and less accessible. In Nepal, where even before the crisis, national statistics painted a grim picture of the prevalence of violence against women and girls in the country, emerging data and reports from actors on the front line indicate that violence has intensified.

This year’s campaign highlights vulnerabilities faced by women and girls, and sexual and gender minorities, particularly those already marginalized and exposed to greater risks, as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. It is a call to action to prioritise and adopt actions to address their needs and to ensure that our collective response and recovery efforts uphold their rights, including their right to live a life free from violence. Every survivor of GBV – where ever she/they live – must be able to receive the full range of care she/they need and deserve, including urgent medical attention and access to follow-up health services, psychosocial care, and protection and justice services; and these services must be informed by continuous data collection to improve delivery and safety standards.

2020 is an important milestone for women and girls’ rights and gender equality as the UN turns 75 and as the world marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – the most progressive blueprint for gender equality and the empowerment of all women, everywhere. An inspiration across generations, the Beijing Declaration is at the core of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals and the commitment to leave no one behind.

As we mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and launch the 16 Days of Activism, let us stand together against violence and speak out wherever and whenever we see it. Let us commit to take action to ensure that the global pandemic does not derail progress on gender equality and let us each play our role in delivering a brighter and equal future for all.