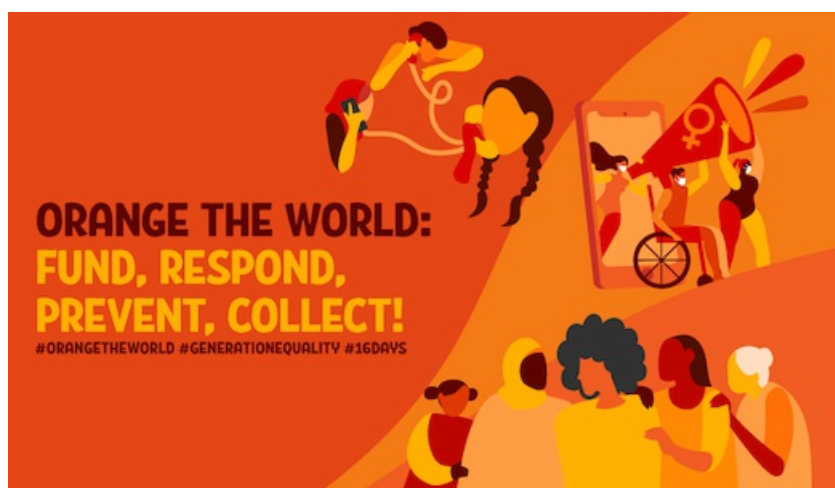


# STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC STATES ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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Brussels, 25 November 2020/OACPS: The annual commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women takes place on 25 November. On behalf of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), H.E. Mr. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, Secretary-General, recalls that the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women. He regrets that to date, violence against women remains a global scourge with an average of 137 women per day being killed by their partner or a member of their family. In fact, during their lifetime, 30% of women experience physical and/or sexual violence at least once perpetrated by one of their relatives.

The Secretary-General also notes with concern the alarming increase in the rate of violence against women and girls since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, he welcomes the United Nations Secretary-General's campaign "Unite to end violence against women", which entails 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, under the theme **"Orange the world: fund, respond, prevent, collect!"**

H.E. Mr. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti reaffirms the unequivocal commitment of the OACPS to combat violence against women. With this in mind, on 18 September 2020, he launched an OACPS code of ethics and conduct, which guarantees zero tolerance for harassment and sexual assault on the part of all staff. In addition, the OACPS has joined forces with UN Women, promoting the UNITE campaign to end violence against women in all its Member States.

The Secretary-General is therefore calling on the Members of the OACPS to align their national legislation and regulations with the relevant international conventions and regional mechanisms dealing with the fight against all forms of violence against women, and to act to combat the causes of this scourge.

The OACPS is part of the spotlight initiative launched by the UN and the EU in 2017, which covers 24 countries in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Pacific and Central Asia. The Secretary-General supports the global appeal launched in this context by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for peace in homes.

The Secretary-General reiterates his support to the Members of the OACPS in their efforts to ensure that all women and girls can lead a life free from violence in accordance with target 5.2 of SDG 5, which aims to eliminate all forms of violence against all women. He firmly believes that the plight of women and sustainable and inclusive development are closely linked, and aligns his remarks with the Statement made by the United Nations Secretary-General to the Security Council on October 29 where he stated, **"Women's leadership and decision making is not a favour. It is essential to peace and progress for**

**all".**

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