

**CCPJC Thematic Discussions on the Implementation of the Kyoto Declaration
(10-12 November 2021)**

**Thematic Session 3: Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective into Crime Prevention;
Addressing the Needs and Protect the Rights of Children and Youth in Crime
Prevention; And Empowering Youth for Crime Prevention**

**Kalliope Mingeirou, Chief of Section, Ending Violence Against Women,
UN Women HQ**

Good afternoon, I am very pleased to be participating in this thematic session on mainstreaming a gender perspective into crime prevention.

Over the past year, we have witnessed how the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a near global increase in the prevalence of violence against women and girls ('VAWG'). This threatens the progress we have made in recent years towards eliminating all forms of VAWG in private and public spaces and online - and preventing it from happening in the first place - as well as achieving broader objectives on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The pandemic has revealed long-standing structural weaknesses in addressing the needs of survivors and has exacerbated other challenges concerning legal discrimination, weak implementation of laws and policies, and discriminatory customary laws and social norms – all of which condone or justify violence and limit survivors' access to justice.

To address these challenges, UN Women, together with partners, launched the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence at the Generation Equality Forum in Paris this past July. Designed as a multi-stakeholder and inter-generational platform, the Action Coalition is a powerful partnership to finally end gender-based violence. The Action

Coalition supports governments and other stakeholders to strengthen global and national standards on ending VAWG and to lead system-wide processes on prevention, and response.

Through this Action Coalition, UN Women is working towards changing discriminatory social norms, gender stereotypes, attitudes and behaviors. Engaging men and boys is a key part of the solution. Building more equitable, non-violent, and respectful norms for being a man is an important strategy for addressing and preventing VAWG, as well as for advancing gender justice.

Similarly, through initiatives such as the UN Joint Global Programme on Essential Services – involving UN Women, UNODC, UNDP, WHO and UNFPA – we are strengthening access to justice for victims, including protection measures, and other essential health and social services. Here, we are also focusing on institutional change and building the capacity of state institutions, including law enforcement, to effectively respond to and prevent further incidents of VAWG and ensure perpetrators are properly sanctioned.

As part of our work on Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls, UN Women is working with local and national governments, grassroots women and women’s organizations, researchers and young feminists to ensure an integrated and comprehensive response - at the subnational level - to the much-neglected issue of preventing and responding to sexual harassment in public spaces.

Indeed, this session today is very timely, as 2021 marks the 10th anniversary of the inception of UN Women’s Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative.¹ Starting with 5 founding city integrated

¹ Supported by the Governments of Spain, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, as well as USAID, the European Union and other partners.

programmes in 2011², this initiative has grown to 54 cities in 32 countries, spanning the global north and south.

Through this initiative, in countries such as Mozambique, Ecuador, Kenya, Egypt, Canada, and Rwanda, youth agents of change actively participate in a range of ‘safe city with women and girls’ interventions. These include co-producing data in scoping studies, which inform safe city policy and programme action. They also involve creating messages for early child development programming in communities and schools on healthy relationships, positive self-esteem, and youth leadership.

We also use hackathons and other outreach mechanisms in Morocco, India, and Tanzania to pilot ideas on gender site planning that integrate women and girls’ safety in public spaces, e.g., in architecture and urban planning. We provide vocational skills training and other economic empowerment programmes, which focus on preventing sexual harassment and other forms of violence against young women and girls.

There are a number of ‘lessons learned’ from the work we have done so far. Strong political will among leaders is crucial for implementing comprehensive and evidence and human rights-based initiatives that enhance gender equality and women and girls’ safety.

It is also important to create safe spaces for young girls, for example, by re-purposing or providing spaces to support face-to-face gatherings or online meetings (for those who have access), so they can learn about their rights, as well as take an active role in implementing prevention measures.

Furthermore, it is vital that we provide practical tools that support the mainstreaming of gender in policy and programme action across a range of line ministries and departments that play a key role in addressing the

² Port Moresby, Cairo, Kigali, Quito and Delhi.

risk factors and also strengthening the protective factors that are associated with VAWG (e.g., women's economic autonomy and access to skills training, credit and employment; the availability of safe spaces or shelters; attitudes and practices that reinforce female subordination and tolerate male violence, etc.)

In conclusion, what the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us again is that we must take urgent action and invest more in long-term measures that focus on the root causes of VAWG. Prevention and redress must be key parts of any COVID-19 response plan.

Thank you.