

# Together to #ENDviolence: Leaders' Statement

## Six game-changing actions to End Violence Against Children

**23 July 2021**

One billion children experience violence and abuse every year. That shocking figure has risen even higher during the COVID-19 pandemic. Violence prevention and response services have been disrupted for 1.8 billion children living in more than 100 countries. 1.5 billion young people affected by school closures lost the protection and support that schools often provide.

Measures to contain the virus, along with economic hardship and family stress, have combined to create 'perfect storm' conditions for children vulnerable to observing or experiencing physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Despite the benefits of digital connectivity, a life lived more online for learning, socialising and gaming has significantly increased children's exposure to those who wish to harm them.

Today, we stand at a critical moment for the world's children. Unless we act now and with urgency, we risk losing a generation of children to the long-term impacts of violence and abuse that will undermine child safety, health, learning and development long after the pandemic subsides. We cannot let that happen.

As the world starts to emerge from the pandemic, we have an opportunity to reimagine and create more peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Now is the time to redouble our collective efforts and translate what we know works into accelerated progress towards the goal of a world where every child grows-up safe, secure and in a nurturing environment.

We must create a world: where every child can grow up and thrive with dignity; where violence and abuse of children is legally outlawed and socially unacceptable; where the relationship between parents and children prevents the intergenerational transmission of violence; where children in every community can safely take advantage of the digital world for learning, playing and socialising; where girls and boys experience stronger developmental and educational outcomes because schools and other learning environments are safe, gender-sensitive, inclusive and supportive; where sport is safe for children; where every effort is made to protect the most vulnerable children from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse, including those living in situations of conflict and fragility (including climate-related fragility); and where all children can access safe and child-friendly help when they need it.

The moral imperative and economic case for action to end violence against children are compelling. Action today will not only prevent the devastating intergenerational social and economic impacts of violence on children, families and societies; it will also help to address the wider impacts of COVID-19 and support progress towards multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

Together, as leaders of organisations committed to ending violence against children, we urge leaders in government, the private sector, faith communities, multilateral organisations, civil society and sports bodies to seize the moment and be champions of this agenda in their countries, organisations, networks and communities. We call on these leaders to prioritise protecting children in their policies, planning, budgets and communications, and to work together to deliver six game-changing actions to end violence against children:





- Ban all forms of violence against children by 2030
- Equip parents and caregivers to keep children safe
- Make the internet safe for children
- Make schools safe, non-violent and inclusive
- Protect children from violence in humanitarian settings
- More investment, better spent

As global organisations working to end violence against children, we will continue to advocate for and invest in effective child protection, promoting solutions that recognise the different ways in which girls and boys experience violence and abuse. We will collectively develop and share technical resources and guidance for policymakers, practitioners, parents, caregivers and children themselves. And we will support the courageous health, education, child protection and humanitarian professionals working alongside faith leaders, community volunteers, parents and young people to keep children safe during these unprecedented times.

In recent years, we have made significant gains in protecting children from violence. We must do all we can to keep children safe during the current turmoil, and work together to build back better — to end all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation of children.

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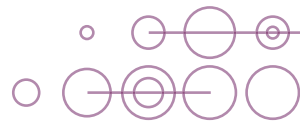
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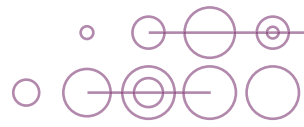
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