

24 November 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against
Women**

The 25 of November will shine bright and orange around the world as we mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

For such a crucial issue, however, one day in orange, one day in the spotlight is clearly not enough.

This year the UN Secretary-General's UNITE campaign encourages everyone to color the world orange for 16 days in a row.

16 days of focus. 16 days of action. And the need for such focus and action is huge.

Think for just one moment of the following:

- One in three women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence – mostly by an intimate partner.
- Of the women killed worldwide in 2012, half were killed by their partners or family.

And this is clearly a global problem:

- In the European Union, where I am from, 45 to 55 % of women have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15.
- In 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East, 133 million girls and women alive today have undergone Female Genital Mutilation.
- And in the United States, one third of all women will be sexually assaulted within their lifetime.

Behind these statistics lies immense human suffering and pain.

It is crucial, therefore that the world sees Violence against Women for what it is – not a mere social problem but a clear violation of human rights.

It is unacceptable that women have to live in fear of their own husbands and family. Fearing for their own lives, and for the safety of their children.

And to me, it is both legally and morally unacceptable that women and girls are denied a fair chance at life because they were born as girls and not boys.

That is why I, as the previous two Presidents of the UN General Assembly, have decided to join the campaign: To make the world orange!

We must all come together to end violence against women.

Every day, every minute, every second that the rights of women and girls are violated, we are losing that battle.

But the tide is turning.

With the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, world leaders have committed to ending poverty and achieving sustainable development globally over the next 15 years.

This includes an explicit commitment to achieve gender equality and to end all forms of violence against women and girls.

Now, each and every one of us has to make sure that these same leaders help make this commitment a reality.

And of course, this will not be possible if women and girls are not included – if half of the world's population is left behind.

Today, therefore, as we turn the world orange, let us unite in making this transformation happen – in moving from commitments to action.

I wish you all a good and orange International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.