

No excuse: Invest to prevent violence against women and girls

Message by the Chair of the ICA GEC on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

One in three women experience physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.

Violence against women is a major human rights violation and a global problem that concerns all of us. According to the WHO, “it is a global public health problem of pandemic proportions, affecting hundreds of millions of women and requiring urgent action.”¹

The COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts and climate change have worsened the risks for this violence and generated new threats, amplifying the vulnerability of women and girls². In addition, new forms of violence are emerging online – harassment, coordinated attacks, gendered disinformation – deterring women and girls from participating in the public sphere³.

As we mark the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#), we reaffirm, one more year, our commitment against this scourge which is not only destroying the lives of millions of women, but also eroding our communities.

The cooperative movement has already taken a clear stance through the ICA Declaration on Decent Work and Against Harassment, 2018⁴. In this text, ICA members invoked the Statement on Cooperative Identity, the ILO Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (n°193), and their commitment with the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, to declare ICA and its constituent bodies as zero tolerance area for violence in the workplace, making an explicit prohibition within its sphere of influence all sexual harassment.

We are proud of the leadership and powerful voices of women in the cooperative movement that proves it to be an inclusive business model that contributes to balance gender inequalities and builds decent work in many sectors of the economy.

This year, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women [calls for increasing investment in the prevention of violence against women and girls](#) (VAWG).

¹ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240026681>

² <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/unite/theme>

³ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000383769>

⁴ <https://www.ica.coop/en/media/library/ica-declaration-decent-work-and-against-harassment>

The ICA Gender Equality Committee endorses the united call of the international community to not only stop but prevent gender-based violence in all spheres. Despite the cooperative movement's efforts to promote peace within the movement and among its stakeholders, we call for additional resources in this area to prevent this infamous story from being repeated over and over again.

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