

b. Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

Violence against women and girls violates, abuses, and impairs their human rights. Violence against women and girls takes many forms, including, but not limited to: intimate-partner violence; sexual violence in conflict and crisis; child, early, and forced marriage; female-genital mutilation/cutting; female infanticide; child sex selection including through sex-selective abortion; dowry-related violence; modern slavery; sexual exploitation and abuse; neglect of girls; and crimes committed in the name of “honour”.

The most common form of violence experienced by women around the world, or 30% of women who have been in a relationship, is physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner.⁶³ In many countries, violence against women, particularly domestic or intimate partner violence, is not a crime.⁶⁴ Women who experience intimate partner violence are more likely than other women to work in casual and part-time jobs and to earn lower wages.⁶⁵ Studies also document higher rates of intimate partner violence during times of conflict.⁶⁶

Sexual and gender based violence disrupts economic activities, reduces earning opportunities, and has long-term and negative impacts on economic productivity, including reducing survivors’ incomes throughout their lives. The estimated cost of gender-based violence is USD \$4.4 trillion, or 5.2% of global GDP, based on studies of reported cases.⁶⁷

Protracted conflicts and periods of state fragility also fundamentally affect the structural constraints on women’s economic empowerment, including through altering and aggravating damaging gender norms and practices. For example, research in South Sudan has found that conflicts exacerbate intimate partner violence, as women reported increases in the brutality and the frequency of assaults during periods of wartime chaos and economic insecurity. In Rumbek, South Sudan, almost 75% of women have reported experiencing violence at the hands of their partners or husbands.⁶⁸ Women and girls may experience many other forms of violence including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), such as: rape; child, early, or forced

marriage, and other harmful practices. Rape has “long been used as a tactic of war, with violence against women during or after armed conflicts reported in every international or non-international war-zone” in violation of international humanitarian law.⁶⁹ There is evidence that conflict can also contribute to increased rates of child marriage, which remain high in post-conflict situations.⁷⁰ SGBV or even the threat of it restricts women’s choices and freedom of mobility, limits their ability to act, diminishes women’s health, and discourages them from participating in the labour market.⁷¹

Changing migration and labour dynamics have increased the number of women and migrant workers vulnerable to migration-related violence and discrimination. Among migrant workers, 83.7 million (55.7%) are men and 66.6 million (44.3%) are women.⁷² During their migratory experience, women must often deal with difficult working and living conditions that expose them to harassment, intimidation, threats, economic and sexual abuse and exploitation, and other forms of violence, including trafficking and racial discrimination.

Regardless of the form, violence against women and girls violates, abuses, and impairs the human rights of individuals. It has wide-ranging negative impacts on families and societies, notably on economic productivity, and undercuts progress made across all sectors.

The costs associated with violence against women and girls include costs relating to the goods and services required to care for survivors of violence. Other costs include lost potential. Reduced productivity and lost personal income are measurable costs affecting the economic performance of both workers and employers.⁷³ Violence against women can affect workforce productivity in many ways, such as: poor work performance due to physical and emotional suffering; absenteeism; and higher recruitment and training costs due to high staff turnover rates. The economic consequences of this productivity loss can be significant with estimated losses of 3.7% of GDP.⁷⁴ At times, the costs associated with violence are borne by children. These include the negative psychological impacts on children who witness violence in the home or the loss of