

Statement by UNIDO Director General on the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

VIENNA, 23 November 2015 – The Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), LI Yong, has issued the following statement on the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to be marked on 25 November:

“Prevention’ is the theme of this year’s International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November and the United Nations campaign for 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

“An estimated one in three women over the age of 15 have experienced sexual or physical violence. The human toll behind these numbers is horrifying but there are also major repercussions for industrial development. Millions of women are employed in the manufacturing sector. Violence at home, on the way to work and in the workplace prevents women from engaging in productive work. Recent reports show that women exposed to violence have higher absenteeism, lower productivity and lower earnings. It is estimated that the overall economic cost of violence against women is between 1.5 and 3.5 per cent of global GDP.

“As the specialized agency of the United Nations mandated to promote and accelerate inclusive and sustainable industrial development, UNIDO contributes to preventing violence against women and girls through the pathway of economic empowerment.

“Educating and investing in women and girls has a multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency and economic growth. But economically strengthening women is not only a means by which to spur and sustain inclusive industrial development. It is also a matter of advancing women's human rights.

“For UNIDO, preventing violence against women means women's opportunities are improved, and hence their positions in the productive sector and at home. It means providing women with access to entrepreneurial and business skills, technologies and credit, so that they can bring about change for themselves. Empowered economically, women exercise greater control over their lives and can challenge the personal and social power relations that lead to gender-based violence.

“UNIDO’s vision is a world of inclusive and sustainable development where no one is excluded from contributing to and benefitting from industrial progress and prosperity. This is only possible in a world where women live free from violence at home, in the marketplace, on the way to work and at work.

“Today, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, I join women and men all over the world in calling for an end to all forms of violence against women and girls.”