



## Concept Note

### *Orange the World: #HearMeToo* *UNiTE to End Violence against Women Campaign's Initiative for* *16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence*

**25 November – 10 December**

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign which takes place each year. It commences on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day. It was originated by activists at the first [Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991](#) and is coordinated each year by the [Center for Women's Global Leadership](#). It is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

In support of this civil society initiative, under the leadership of the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, the [United Nations Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women Campaign](#) (UNiTE) calls for global action to increase awareness, galvanise advocacy efforts and share of knowledge and innovations. In recent years, the UNiTE campaign has utilized the colour orange to represent a brighter future, free from violence against women and girls, as a unifying theme running through its global activities.

#### **2. UNiTE CAMPAIGN THEME FOR 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM 2018**

Survivor advocates, grassroots activists and women's human rights defenders around the world work tirelessly to raise awareness and seek justice on the issue of violence against women. For far too long, systemic silencing of victims/survivors and impunity for the perpetrators led to an entrenched endemic of violence. In recent years however, the drive for change had garnered strength as more and more women have come forward by using social media and other platforms to tell their story and call for change with #MeToo, #TimesUp, 'Ni una menos', #NotOneMore,

#BalanceTonPorc and many other movements. While the names and the contexts may differ, one common theme runs deep. These stories bring to light the extensive abuse of power committed by men against women that are happening across geographic locations and social contexts.

The impact of these movements has demonstrated that in unity, lasting change is possible. The time is now to build on the momentum paved by survivors and advocates in all parts of the world. The UNiTE Campaign calls on the UN system and partners across all sectors to support survivor advocates, women's movements and women's human rights defenders in ending systemic violence against women and girls.

This is why the UNiTE Campaign's global advocacy theme this year is:

### *Orange the World: #HearMeToo*

The theme and activities of the UNiTE Campaign in 2018 under the global banner *Orange the World: #HearMeToo*, will mobilise all UNiTE networks, including the UN system, government partners, civil society, schools and universities, private sector, sports associations and individuals to stand in solidarity with survivor advocates, women's movements and women's human rights defenders who are working to end violence against women and girls.

Under the theme *Orange the World: #HearMeToo*, the UNiTE partners are encouraged to host events with women's movements, survivor advocates and women's human rights defenders to create opportunities for dialogue between activists, policy makers and the public. These events may take place through physical as well as through online platforms. Creative mediums and the arts may be used to support storytelling and advocacy through the voices of the women.

*Orange the World: #HearMeToo* theme will be launched in September at the United Nations General Assembly, two months prior to the 16 Days of Activism. As in previous years, the colour orange will be a key theme unifying all activities, with buildings and landmarks lit and decorated in orange to bring global attention to the initiative.

#### **Advocacy objectives for 2018:**

1. **Amplify the voices of diverse women's movements** across geographic locations and sectors working to prevent and end violence against women.
2. **Advocate for specific changes** within institutions and workplaces, including within the UN system, private sector organizations, education institutions, civil society organizations and governments to promote gender equality and end violence against women.
3. **Call for specific financing commitments** in national efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls.

## Principles:

1. **Honour and acknowledge women's movements and their leadership** in 16 Days of Activism and in ending violence against women and girls.
2. **'Leave No One Behind'**: apply a human rights-based approach where attention is focused first on the most underserved and disadvantaged groups of women and girls in efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls.
3. **Survivor-centred**: take a respectful, 'do no harm' approach to the retelling of survivor stories with their permission and under the conditions in which they have agreed to<sup>1</sup>. This principle is vital for the engagement of survivor advocates in activism. All UNiTE partners must ensure that survivor advocates' rights, safety, dignity and confidentiality are upheld.
4. **Multi-sectoral**: everyone in society has an important role to play in ending violence against women and must work together across sectors to address the various aspects of violence against women.

## 3. ACTIONS

### **All UNiTE partners, including UN agencies, civil society, private sector, sports associations, youth groups, universities and schools**

- Hold 'listening events' with survivor advocates, women's movements, and women's human rights defenders. Create opportunities for dialogue between activists and policy makers, private sector organizations and the public. Discuss the need for inclusive policies and programming for ending violence against women.
- Feature stories from activists and survivor advocates through print and digital platforms. Explore creative and innovative approaches, such as through the medium of documentary, exhibitions, digital and print media. This could be done in partnership with NGOs and partners in the creative arts sectors.
- Tell stories of how your organization is supporting activists and survivor advocates.
- Run an online and offline awareness raising campaign under the theme *Orange the World: #HearMeToo* during the 16 Days of Activism to stimulate public conversations and educate the public on what individuals and organisations can do to end violence against women. Under the theme, all UNiTE partners are encouraged to light their physical spaces including their workplaces and monuments, online spaces such as the website, and to wear the colour orange.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, please refer '[Survivor-centred approach](#)' resources at [the UN Women's Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence and Women and Girls](#).

<b>Key Dates</b>	
August	The theme for the UNiTE Campaign’s 16 Days of Activism is shared with the UNiTE partners. UNiTE partners to start planning. The promotion of the <i>#HearMeToo</i> hashtag is embargoed until the formal announcement in September.
September	Announcement of <i>#HearMeToo</i> by the UN Women Executive Director during the UN General Assembly (18-25 September). Exact date will be confirmed and communicated with UNiTE partners. All UNiTE partners are encouraged to promote the <i>#HearMeToo</i> theme from the moment of the launch date.
October	Under <i>Orange the World: #HearMeToo</i> theme, UNiTE partners are encouraged to organize awareness raising activities in support of or in partnership with members of their national movements, women’s human rights defenders and survivor advocates, especially on the 25 <sup>th</sup> of October which is Orange Day.
25 November	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women – commencement of 16 Days of Activism. The United Nations Official Commemoration for the Elimination of Violence against Women will be held at the United Nations Headquarter Building in New York. From 25 November to 10 December, UNiTE partners are encouraged to organize awareness raising activities daily under the theme of <i>Orange the World: #HearMeToo</i> .
10 December	International Human Rights Day which marks the conclusion of the 16 Days of Activism.