

Welcome Remarks
UN Resident Coordinator
Didier Trebucq
Speech for UN House Lighting to observe 16 Days of Activism
Against GBV

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

- Minister of Labour, Social Security and Third Sector – Government of Barbados – **The Honourable Colin Jordan**
- Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs – Government of Barbados, **The Honourable Kirk Humphrey**
- Representative , UN Women Multi-Country Office – Caribbean – **Ms. Tonni Brodber**
- Ambassadors and members of the Diplomatic Corps – Excellencies from the Embassies of Japan, the United States of America, Argentina, Germany, China, and British High Commission
- Permanent Secretaries and distinguished representatives of the Government
- Development Partners
- Civil Society representatives
- Colleague Heads of Agencies and staff
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good evening!

It is my pleasure to be with you this evening, and to see the vibrant colour orange reflected all around - **symbolizing a brighter future, free of violence. We join millions of women and men worldwide to raise our voices against this terrible and prevalent form of discrimination and violation of human rights.**

I extend a special welcome to the Government of Barbados, whom we're pleased to partner with on this event, along with all our various partners who work with us to fight against this enemy which SG Guterres' describes as "***the world's longest, deadliest pandemic.***"

While it's gratifying to see the spotlight being placed on this horrific issue, as we commemorate the #16DaysOfActivism under the global theme "***UNiTE! Activism to End Violence against Women and Girls***", the end is far from today's reality.

Statistics show that one in three (33%) women worldwide have experienced some form of GBV at the hands of their partner at least once in their lifetime. **In the Caribbean, its higher with 39% to 55% of women experiencing intimate partner violence,** well above the global average. According to ECLAC, **there are 12 violent gender related deaths of women every day** in Latin America and the Caribbean.

But what the numbers don't tell, is that there are survivors in all our neighbourhoods. They don't tell the stories of Sandra, Michelle, Rosie, and the victims who often feel trapped, and afraid of seeking help. Many of these women live in isolation, they feel invisible, and are forced to be silent at the hands of violence and discrimination. They are real, vulnerable people, with disabilities, older age, living in rural backgrounds, or living with HIV.

As we know well, this situation was compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, **which gave rise to the “shadow pandemic” of GBV.** Here in the region, we've seen first-hand that partner and family violence **comes at a significant cost not just to survivors, but to families, communities and the region together.** We see and hear the names, faces and stories that make painful headlines, but it is the stories which go untold that need our attention the most. We have to tell their story and speak out against GBV in all of our spaces.

Unless women and girls thrive, societies as a whole fail to thrive. Together, **we have to reach every last woman – as** government, women's organisations and civil society. They **must** participate in decision

making in all aspects of public life. Barbados is a fantastic example of women in leadership at the top.

The UN continues to envision women as equal and empowered members of society, free of discrimination and violence by 2030. If we're to truly **#LeaveNoOneBehind**, let's **act now** to address the root causes of violence, change the social norms, work with communities, and prevent.

You can count on our collective UN efforts, using our model of delivering AS ONE, to ensure that countries receive tailored support to meet their needs, and to advance the 2030 Agenda.

Therefore, I **commend the Government for its commitment to support the re-launch of the UN Women Partnership for Peace initiative here in Barbados**, which we will hear more about later in the programme.

Join me also in publicly recognizing Minister Jordan, a longstanding advocate against GBV, for **remaining at the forefront of this pivotal work**. (Minster Jordan, your efforts to increase awareness about GBV in the workplace, as evidenced in your championing the **Addressing GBV**

in the Workplace Project in collaboration with UN Women and the ILO in 2020, have not gone unnoticed.)

The EU must also be lauded for its ongoing partnership and significant investment in the Global Spotlight Initiative, **boasting protection of girls, particularly adolescent girls, as an important part of the Prevention Pillar.**

I'm pleased to report that our Regional Spotlight Initiative and Grenada country programmes are bearing fruit, with Governments and legislators strengthening laws and regulations to better protect women and girls — **and** providing protection and counselling services for survivors.

Ladies and gentlemen, Caribbean women and girls deserve every opportunity to live fulfilled lives. **Eradicating violence against women and girls MUST be everyone's business.**

Educating men and boys is also critical to ending the cycle of violence. We must also **empower women and girls to support and speak up** for equality, non-violence, respect, and healthy relationships.

I look forward to the outcomes of the re-launched Partnership for Peace initiative in Barbados , as well as our collective efforts to fight for gender equality. Our mothers, wives, children, sisters, friends, and colleagues – should enjoy their place in society in equality and with freedom from violence.

We need your help and commitment to make sure we reach every last woman. Thank you.