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UNESCO and UN Women release guidance to end gender-based violence in education

8 December - To help end a global phenomenon that affects millions of children, families and communities worldwide, UNESCO and UN Women are releasing today a *Global Guidance on Addressing School Related Gender-Based Violence*.

Every year, an estimated 246 million children are subject to some form of gender-based violence – mistreatment, bullying, psychological abuse and sexual harassment. Developed with a dedicated Global Working Group*, the Guidance was commissioned to help ministries of education and education stakeholders understand more about School Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) and identify ways to both prevent it and respond effectively when it happens.

The Global Guidance is a comprehensive, one-stop resource providing key principles, practical strategies, case studies and recommended tools for education sectors and their partners working to eliminate gender-based violence in educational settings. The Guidance lays out a 6-prong approach that begins with leadership and includes legislative reform, integrating the issue into national policies and plans, and ensuring that schools are safe and supportive.

"For millions of children and young people across the world, the school environment is not the safe and supportive place it should be," said UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova. "*Instead, school days are marred by gender-based violence, which includes bullying, verbal and sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and corporal punishment. Girls are particularly vulnerable, while situations of protracted conflict, displacement and poverty exacerbate the risks of gender based violence.*"

SRGBV has very real consequences in learners' lives, ranging from low self-esteem and depression, to early and unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections such as HIV. This violence also has a serious impact on educational outcomes, with many students achieving lower grades than expected, avoiding school or dropping out completely, resulting in girls achieving below their potential.

"Until School-Related Gender-Based Violence is eliminated in and around schools across the world, many of the ambitious targets set by the global community through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to provide safe and supportive learning environments, to achieve gender equality and to end violence against women and girls, will not be realized," said UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

The Guidance - launched during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence global campaign - highlights that schools can play a key role in helping children and young people develop healthy attitudes that can help prevent this form of violence and foster gender equality. Education's role in challenging gender and social norms around violence are a cornerstone of any prevention efforts.

The other components of the comprehensive approach promoted by this Guidance include providing safe and accessible procedures for reporting violent incidents, engaging with partners such as teachers' unions and families, and, improving monitoring systems to understand the scale and scope of violence.

For more information, please contact –

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Download the Global Guidance: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002466/246651E.pdf

*The *Global Working Group to End School-related Gender-based Violence (SRGBV)* represents more than 40 international agencies, civil society organizations and institutions promoting girls' education and gender equality.

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