16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GBV

UNiTE TO END DIGITAL VIOLENCE AGAINST ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS - REGIONAL DIALOUGE
9 DECEMBER 2025
3:00 PM – 4:30 PM EAT

CONCEPT NOTE

I. Introduction

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10 (Human Rights Day) aimed at galvanizing action to end violence against women and girls worldwide. As part of our commitment to this global movement, UNDP is intensifying efforts to address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) across our programming on the African continent, as well as embedding it within the workplace. The theme for 2025 is "UNiTE to End Digital Violence Against All Women and Girls". This theme emphasizes on a call for action against online abuse, harassment, and control, and to urge the creation of safer digital spaces.

II. Background and Regional Context

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), also known as digital violence against women and girls (VAWG), refers to "an act of violence perpetrated by one or more individuals that is committed, assisted, aggravated and amplified in part or fully by the use of information and communication technologies or digital media, against a person on the basis of their gender"[1]. With the rapid growth of internet access, social media, and digital communication tools, violence against women and girls has evolved beyond physical spaces and now extends into virtual environments. TFGBV (digital VAWG) takes many forms including online grooming and sexual exploitation, catfishing, cyberbullying, hate speech, doxxing, stalking, sextortion, trafficking, and online abuse & harassment often targeting women political leaders, activists, and media professionals.

The extent of digital violence is concerning. In Sub-Saharan Africa, about 28% of women in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Senegal, and South Africa have faced online abuse, most commonly sexual harassment (36%), name-calling (33%), and stalking (26%)[1]. Cases of organized online attacks are increasing, especially against women in public roles including journalists, activists, and politicians. Notably, 46% of female parliamentarians[2] in Africa have faced sexist online attacks, and 73% of women journalists[3] report experiencing online violence, often tied to disinformation campaigns intended to discredit them. Moreover, young women and girls are more likely to experience digital violence, with 58% reporting experiences of online harassment, highlighting the heightened risks faced by younger generations in digital spaces [4].

Digital violence severely limits women's social, economic, and political participation by creating safety threats and reinforcing gender inequality. It disproportionately targets women in public life to deter their participation, while also exposing those with limited digital access to control and exploitation. This violence has devastating effects on women and girls, often escalating into offline harm including stalking and femicide, and actively undermines global and regional human rights and gender equality standards.

[1] https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA-TFGBV-Making%20All%20Spaces%20Safe.pdf
[2] Iyer et al. Association for Progressive Communication, Policy, 2020
[3]https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Accelerating-efforts-to-tackle-online-and-technology-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls-en_0.pdf
[4] https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unescos-global-survey-online-violence-against-women-journalists
[5]https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/faqs/digital-abuse-trolling-stalking-and-other-forms-of-technology-facilitated-violence-against-women

Although significant challenges remain, regional progress has been made in developing and implementing digital VAWG-related laws and policies. Key examples include the Maputo Protocol (2003), which defines "violence against women" to encompass physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm, including threats, in both private and public spheres; the AU Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention, 2014), which provides a framework for online safety; and the AU Convention on Ending VAWG (2025), which explicitly acknowledges violence occurring in cyberspace. These advances provide a foundation for more consistent and inclusive national strategies aimed at preventing and addressing digital violence against women and girls.

UNDP is committed to ending digital VAWG across Africa through coordinated regional and national efforts that strengthen institutions, enhance evidence and data systems, build capacity, and promote digital solutions. Key initiatives include the Spotlight Initiative, being implemented at both regional and country levels to combat VAWG; the e-Monitor+ platform, which enables real-time monitoring and detection of online violence; and capacity-building programmes for law enforcement, aimed at improving the ability of police to investigate and respond effectively to digital violence.

III. Session Target Audiences & Objectives

A key objective of this webinar is to provide participants with a clear overview of the AU Convention on EVAWG and its ratification process, offering practical guidance that will strengthen the capacity of UNDP Country Office Gender Focal Points to support Member States in advancing national ratification efforts. This aligns with the broader aim of the session, which is convened under the 2025 theme UNiTE to End Digital Violence Against All Women and Girls and seeks to deepen understanding of the legal and policy frameworks needed to prevent and address VAWG, including in digital spaces.

The session will explore the expanding challenge of digital VAWG across Africa and highlight collective actions contributing to safer and more inclusive digital environments. It will emphasize the pivotal role of civil society and women's rights organizations in shaping legal, policy, and community-driven responses. Participants will benefit from shared experiences across regions, including regional assessments on digital VAWG (TFGBV), field-level responses in humanitarian and crisis contexts, and innovative digital safety initiatives centered on survivors.

The target audience includes both internal and external stakeholders. Internally, the webinar aims to strengthen awareness and engagement among UNDP staff, leadership, and technical teams across thematic areas, recognizing the cross-cutting nature of gender. Externally, it brings together partners working to end digital VAWG, including the African Union, CSOs, and women's rights organizations.

IV. Learning Objectives

- Strengthen understanding of the AU Convention on EVAWG, including its purpose, key provisions, and the steps involved in the ratification process to better support Member States in advancing ratification efforts.
- Enhance understanding of the scope, forms, and impacts of digital VAWG across Africa, including its intersections with offline violence and its manifestation in crisis contexts.
- Identify effective strategies and innovations for preventing and responding to digital violence against women and girls, drawing on regional and national experiences.
- Understand the leading role of CSOs and women's rights organizations in ending digital VAWG.
- Inspire collective action and advocacy towards integrating digital safety and gender equality into broader governance, human rights, and development agendas.

V. Logistics

- The session will be 90 minutes.
- Online webinar on Zoom.
- Conducted primarily in English, with French interpretation available.