



FIGO

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF
GYNECOLOGY & OBSTETRICS

FIGO reaffirms commitment: 'International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women' (25 November 2012)

On 25 November 2012, FIGO reaffirms its commitment to the *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*.

In December 1999, the General Assembly of the United Nations designated this day each year on which to invite governments, international organisations and NGOs to organise activities designed to raise public awareness of gender-based violence.

In 2008, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched *UNiTE to End Violence against Women* - a multi-year campaign aimed at preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in all parts of the world. Governments, civil society, women's organisations, young people, the private sector, the media and the entire UN system are encouraged to work together to address the global pandemic of violence against women and girls.

By 2015, UNiTE aims to achieve the following five goals in all countries:

- Adopt and enforce national laws to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls
- Adopt and implement multi-sectoral national action plans
- Strengthen data collection on the prevalence of violence against women and girls
- Increase public awareness and social mobilisation
- Address sexual violence in conflict

(SOURCE: <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/about.shtml>)

FIGO's stance

As a leading organisation dedicated to promoting the well-being of women and to raise the standards of practice in obstetrics and gynecology, FIGO has a vision that women of the world should achieve the highest possible standards of physical, mental, reproductive and sexual health and well-being throughout their lives.

FIGO believes that women should be valued equally with men, and that both should have their rights respected. All women, everywhere, count.

Violence in context

- Each year, more than 1.6 million people worldwide lose their lives to violence
- For every person who dies as a result of violence, many more are injured and suffer from a range of physical, sexual, reproductive and mental health problems

- Violence places a massive burden on national economies, costing countries billions of US dollars each year in health care, law enforcement and lost productivity (SOURCE: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/en/)

FIGO President, Professor Sir Sabaratnam Arulkumaran, said: 'The list of abuses routinely suffered by women is sobering, and includes harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)/cutting; trafficking of women and girls; "Honour" killings; child marriage; "Virgin Cleansing" HIV; violence in pregnancy; sex selection and female feticide; female infanticide; sexual abuse; sexual violence in armed conflict; coerced pregnancy or abortion; rape of women with disabilities; and inequitable access to healthcare of girls/women.'

He added: 'The role of education is an extremely vital one. It is important for everyone, including girls and women, because it leads to other opportunities and provides a firm base within families from which other family members can be inspired and encouraged. Educated women are empowered women - women who can look after themselves as whole beings: their physical, mental, reproductive and sexual health. Educated women can travel through life confidently. There are still many areas of the world intent on stifling such basic human rights and freedoms.'

'The recent news story of Malala Yousafzai, a 15-year-old education campaigner who was shot in north-west Pakistan, reflects the often enormous difficulties that many girls and women face in obtaining the education that is rightfully theirs.'

He ended: 'FIGO's work through its 125 member societies involves huge emphasis on the importance of education, and it continues to work with other global organisations to raise awareness that violence is not acceptable. The inspiring story of Malala should give new impetus to addressing the human rights abuses that women still face daily across the globe.'