



Gender Based Violence (GBV) – a Joined up Approach

Ending violence against women and girls, which rose sharply during COVID, is one of the four Commonwealth priorities on gender equality. Recognizing its economic costs, we need concerted and coordinated action for addressing GBV in the workplace, in supply chains, and beyond, including the way in which feeds off and contributes to power imbalances ensuring also that those most vulnerable are protected. We call for the following reaffirming and reinforcing a cohesive approach which facilitates collaboration:-

1. Fifteen Commonwealth states have ratified the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment at work: C190 (adopted in 2019, operational 25 June 2021) and others should ratify immediately along with its accompanying Recommendation No.206 which seeks to prevent gender-based violence in the workplace.¹
2. Push for increased ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to end violence against women and girls by Commonwealth countries and reporting on CEDAW.²
3. Develop, promote and implement emerging policy-related initiatives to combat online harassment and violence such as the EU Directive on Gender-Based Violence (2024) which sets standards for the criminalisation of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence.³

¹ In discussions with several member states several have been supportive of this proposal including Bahamas, the current Chair of the Women Affairs Ministerial Meeting from 2023 and which ratified C190 in 2022

² This can include engagement with the CEDAW Committee and contributing to Shadow Reports supporting the CEDAW Committee's work with state parties which suggested at the CBWN side event at the Commonwealth Office in New York during CSW68 by Esther Eghobamien-Mshelia (Vice-Chair, CEDAW from Nigeria) on 14 March 2024

³ This should reflect and reinforce the analysis and recommendations from [the five Commonwealth Secretariat reports on each region on Addressing Online Violence Against Women and Girls: The Role of Bystanders \(2023\)](#) made possible by financial support from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

AGENDA

5m: Chair and introduction: Arif Zaman, CBWN

10m: Dr. Isata Mahoi, Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs, Sierra Leone

5m: CWN statement

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- Saina Tomi, Organiser, Samoa First Union, Commonwealth Trade Union Group (CTUG)
- Lemalu Sina Retzlaff, Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA)
- Kelly Nicoll, President, Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)

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- Siew Yong Gnanalingam, President, Soroptimist International (SI)
- Judith Diment MBE, Rotary International
- Alison Duxbury, former Dean of the Law School at the University of Melbourne and former International Board Chair, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)

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- Arif Zaman, Board member, Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network (CBWN)
- Henry Nkhoma, Director, Gender Development, Gender Division, Cabinet, Office of the President, Zambia

30m Q&A

10m: Summary and next steps