



Joint Press Release

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Thimphu, November 25, 2024: “Violence Against Women in any form goes beyond the visible and immediate scars. It shatters lives, devastates families, and perpetuates an unsafe world for our children and future generations. Government, civil society organizations, private sector, individuals and communities must unite and invest in inclusive approaches to end violence against women and girls. Together, we can create a safe and equitable world for women and girls, where their rights, dignity, and potential are fully realized.”

These words from Her Majesty Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck guide Bhutan’s resolve as the nation joins the global community in observing the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25, 2024.

This year’s global theme, “UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls,” highlights the urgency of addressing gender-based violence and its root causes. Globally, nearly one in three women experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. Bhutan’s reality is equally concerning, with the National Health Survey 2023 reporting that 24.9% of Bhutanese women have experienced physical or sexual violence, and 10.8% faced such violence in the past year.

Adolescent pregnancy remains another critical challenge. Among adolescent girls, 4.5% were pregnant, 1.1% are currently pregnant, and 3.1% have given birth. These figures point to the need for comprehensive interventions that empower young girls and promote coordinated mechanisms, raising awareness and establishing a robust and result focused monitoring framework within the system.

This year, Bhutan has adopted the theme, “Adolescent Pregnancy: Prevention and Intervention,” focusing on targeted interventions and mechanisms to protect and support girls.



Awareness campaigns led by the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), RENEW, and Development Partners are underway across the country's 20 dzongkhags. These efforts, supported by RENEW's Community Service Centers and MSTF-CBSS networks, aimed to prevent adolescent pregnancies, promote reproductive health, and ensure that every girl has the opportunity to thrive.

The National Commission for Women and Children along with key partners including development partners remains committed to gender equality through a range of initiatives, including:

1. Developing a Gender-Based Violence Strategy and Action Plan.
2. Revising the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on GBV.
3. Advancing the National Gender Equality Policy
4. Effective implementation of Gender Equality in Public Administration (GEPA) Report and its action plan.
5. Timely reporting to international treaty bodies, including CEDAW, CRC, and the Beijing Platform for Action.
6. Formulating a 10-year strategy plan.

These coordinated efforts are integral to our society where women and girls live free from violence, neglect and discrimination, empowered to participate fully in all aspects of life.

On this day, we call every individual for collective action to eliminate violence against women and girls to create a future of safety, dignity, and equality for women and girls everywhere.

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