

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME



SAFE CITIES AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES

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The Issue

Women and girls fear and experience various types of sexual violence in public spaces, from unwanted sexual remarks and touching to rape and femicide. It is a universal issue. It happens on streets, in and around schools, public transportation, schools, workplaces, public toilets, and parks in urban, rural, and conflict/post conflict settings.

This reality reduces women's and girls' freedom of movement and their ability to study and work, access essential services, participate in public life, and enjoy recreation opportunities. This impacts negatively their health and well-being.

In 2013, the United Nations Commission for the Status of Women (CSW57) identified various forms of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) in public spaces as a distinct area of concern, and called on governments to prevent it. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has set "the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres" as one of its specific goals (Target 5.2). In 2016, the New Urban Agenda commits to promote a safe, healthy, inclusive, and secure environment in cities and human settlements for all to live, work, and participate in urban life without fear of violence and intimidation.

Cover photo: Young women and men agents of change conduct safety audits in Quito to identify spaces that could change to improve feelings of safety among residents in the programme site, Quito 2015.

Our Strategy for Change

UN Women's Global Flagship Initiative "Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces" builds on its "Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls" Global Programme launched in November 2010, to prevent and respond to SVAWG in public spaces.

Participating cities commit to:

1. Identify gender-responsive locally relevant and owned interventions. Conducting a scoping study is essential as it provides specific data to ensure a deep understanding of local forms of SVAWG in public spaces. Key stakeholders reflect on the findings to develop programmes with a specific set of results based on the local context and joint accountability.

UN WOMEN'S FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME INITIATIVES

Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces is one of UN Women's Flagship Programming Initiatives designed to ensure that UN Women can deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This Flagship Programme will support national governments to address multiple SDG targets across multiple goals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROGRAMME, CONTACT:
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2. Develop and effectively implement comprehensive laws and policies to prevent and respond to sexual violence in public spaces.

Through capacity building, awareness raising, community mobilization and other strategies, authorities, women's grassroots and community partners are equipped to advocate, develop, and monitor the effective implementation of law and policies, and to make sure that accompanying resources are in place to support this action.

3. Investments in the safety and economic viability of public spaces.

A gender approach to urban planning ensures that the needs of women and men are taken into account across all municipal departments' planning. This includes public infrastructure (investments in safe potable water, improved sanitation, lighting, creation of market stalls, provision of training on financial literacy) and economic development, focusing on opportunities for women's empowerment.

4. Change attitudes and behaviors to promote women's and girls' rights to enjoy public spaces free from violence.

Girls, boys and other influential champions are engaged in transformative activities in schools and other settings to promote respectful gender relationships, gender equality, and safety in public spaces.

UN Women is a strong technical partner in city-led programmes. At global level, a package of guidance notes and other tools are available which can be adapted to country context. In collaboration with partners across cities, UN Women facilitates an online Knowledge and Exchange Platform, and convenes a Global Leaders' Forum to promote exchange and advance knowledge on trends, practices and lessons learned in safe cities and safe public spaces initiatives.

FACTS AND FIGURES - ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- In Washington, D.C., United States, a survey revealed that 27% of women transit riders experienced some form of sexual harassment (WMATA, 2016).
- In Port Moresby, a scoping study reveals that over 90% of women and girls have experienced some form of sexual violence when accessing public transportation (UN Women 2014).
- In Kigali, baseline study shows that 55% of women reported that they were concerned about going to educational institutions after dark (UN Women 2013).

SOME ACHIEVEMENTS

- Quito (Ecuador) amended a local ordinance to strengthen action against sexual harassment in public spaces. In 2016, the municipality adopted the Safe City Programme as an emblematic programme with strategies, interventions and a budget allocation.
- Egypt's Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Development adopted women's safety audits to ensure a gender approach to urban planning.
- Rwanda's Gender Monitoring Office launched their own training on the prevention of sexual harassment against women in public transportation.
- Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea) established vendors associations in their safe market programme, with 50% representation of women in executive positions.

Partnerships for change

AT LOCAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS: Authorities from a range of sectors and ministries (economic development, urban planning, transport, community development, women's machinery, justice, police, education, health, etc.); grassroots women's, youth, and men's groups and organizations, UN agencies; research and educational institutions, private sector, media, etc.

AT GLOBAL LEVEL: UN-Habitat, UNICEF and other agencies, Women in Cities International, Women and Habitat Network of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Huairou Commission, and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

A growing list of champion cities

Participating cities: Cairo, New Delhi, Kigali, Port Moresby, Quito, Cape Town, Marrakech, Rabat, Quezon City, Mexico City, Dublin, Winnipeg (jointly with the Province of Manitoba in Canada), Edmonton (jointly with the Province of Alberta in Canada), Sakai, New York, Brussels, Guatemala City, Maputo, Tegucigalpa, Medellín, Bogotá, Cuenca, Villavicencio, Ho Chi Minh, Santo Domingo, Puebla and Torreón.

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