



2022 INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: MESSAGE FROM XIOMARA NUÑEZ DE CÉSPEDES, CHAIR OF THE ICA GENDER EQUALITY COMMITTEE

As we commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, we reaffirm our commitment to maintain an open and unrestricted campaign against this scourge that harms the peace of mind of all communities around the world.

Violence against women and girls continues to be one of the world's main human rights violations. It damages the health, dignity, safety and autonomy of women and girls. Women who have suffered physical, psychological or sexual abuse have higher rates of physical and mental health illnesses, which also place a greater economic burden on families.

Violence affects not only the perpetrator but also those around them. A life without violence will be possible when we commit ourselves as a society to not let perpetrators go unpunished, to courageously denounce the facts and to apply the full weight of the law on the part of the authorities.

We need to join forces to support all initiatives that will put an end to this social evil. Education on the prevention of violence in our cooperatives is more than necessary. Furthermore support for women and girls who have been assaulted and care for children orphaned by femicide is more than just a mention and must form part of the social welfare plans in which we invest. It is not about words, but about concrete actions that lessen the disastrous impacts of this great evil.

This year, as every year, the International Day to End Violence against Women marks the start of the UN's UNiTE! Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls. There will be 16 Days of Activism, concluding with International Human Rights Day. From the Gender Equality Committee of the International Cooperative Alliance, we will join this campaign to ensure needed change. The UNITE! campaign aims to mobilise all members of society to become activists, stand in solidarity with women's rights defenders and support actions around the world to prevent the regression of women's rights as well as achieve a world free of gender violence.

From the GEC and from the cooperative movement we will continue to raise our voice in favour of each and every one of the abused women and girls.



We are more than sure that silence is not an option and we must ensure that the media make use of their influence in a positive way in order to help reproduce a more beneficial image for women, who are harassed by discrediting campaigns that give rise to many of the aggressions they suffer.

In keeping with cooperative values and principles, cooperatives must set an example in the social and economic sphere. We must look in particular at "Principle 2: Democratic Member Control" and promote women's leadership and involvement in decision-making. Only in this way will we move towards gender equality.

There are many ways to help end this global problem that affects half of the population. Let us seize the opportunity to eradicate violence against women and girls.

All of us must continue to cry out "Enough is enough, not one more" with one voice!

Xiomara Nuñez de Cespedes
Chair of the ICA Gender Equality Committee