

Contribution by SUSANNA CAMUSSO, Secretary General of Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL) on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Education International (EI) and Public Services International (PSI) for the General Discussion at the UNCSW 57

Violence against women and girls remains one of the most appalling global and structural human rights violations. Whatever its shape, it is always due to an abusive and unacceptable behaviour. One out of every three girls born today worldwide will face some forms of violence in her lifetime. Violence exists in all societies, all countries, all geographical areas and everywhere affects all society layers and groups of women and girls. In many countries, such as Italy, while general murders show a decreasing trend, researches show that femicides represent a stable data over time and since a long time. On behalf of the international trade union movement, here represented by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Education International (EI) and Public Services International (PSI), we state that institutional actors have not been sufficient to address this issue now. Therefore, violence is a major social problem that is likely to fall properly countered: if women do not feel adequately protected, the result is

Conclusions which includes a strong commitment to develop a time bound Global Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Girls, having a particular focus on the prevention of violence, providing monitoring and operational guidance regarding the existing international obligations, such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. Gender inequalities and discrimination exacerbates violence. Along five years of deep economic and social global crisis, work-related problems, blackmailing situations and pressures have increased for most women. Crisis is being used as an excuse to scale back workers' rights and eliminate jobs, weakening women's status and legal protection at work. The existing labour market structure, either preventing women participation or making them more and more precarious, represents a major hindrance for women's autonomy and empowerment.

Privatisation, structural readjustment and various "austerity" measures have entailed the loss of important public services and public service jobs. Since in many countries there is a high concentration of women in public sector jobs, women are disproportionately affected as workers and as owing to their dependency on public services. In addition, the cuts in public spending have negative impacts on the effectiveness of prevention measures and social services provided to victims of violence. The elimination of violence requires strong intervention from public authorities to design and implement appropriate prevention measures, to ensure legal protection and the prosecution of cases and to provide support and compensation for the victims. For this reason, we think that a three-directions global action should be adopted and implemented, without further delay, both in cultural and institutional terms. The first one should be prevention: focusing on education of girls and boys, women and men, launching public campaigns on issues of respect for person, safety in the cities, regulations protecting women subjected to violence, counselling centres for people in need. Secondly, counteracting violence and ensuring certainty of punishment. Thirdly, guaranteeing assistance to those who suffered violence. In other terms, ensuring that women can fully enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms. As violence against women and girls is a defeat for everybody.