

## Recommendations on Online and ICT-facilitated VAWG

UN Women

### Summary of text:

The continual evolution and innovation of digital technologies facilitates existing forms of gender-based violence and breeds novel forms of online gender-based violence (OGBV) as well. The scale, speed, and ease of Internet communication combined with anonymity, pseudonymity, affordability, impunity and limited liability, coupled with the lack of preventive and response measures, facilitates the proliferation of gendered hate and harassment. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a global increase in various forms of OGBV. In recent years, there has also been a growth in coordinated groups engaging in sexual harassment against women, including men's rights activists, incels (involuntary celibates), and other groups engaging in the 'manosphere', and there is also growing evidence of links to extremist groups.

For many years, States and private companies, including Internet intermediaries, civil society and women's rights organizations have worked to document, prevent and respond to OGBV. However, there is an absence of normative frameworks which have been explicitly developed to consider the unique contexts of technology-facilitated violations, with many countries struggling to keep pace with the rapid evolution of technology and emerging forms of OGBV. The lack of a common definition and comprehensive and accurate data collection, including standardized concepts, operational definitions and measures has led to fragmented approaches and a lack of comparable and reliable data. As a result, there are significant knowledge gaps about the nature, prevalence, impacts and drivers of OGBV, and it is often underreported.

### Key recommendations:

- States must recognize OGBV as a human rights violation and private companies must work proactively to consider how to apply guidelines to their existing platforms and ongoing upgrades. UN Agencies should support this process through guidance development.
- Efforts to prevent OGBV must engage men and boys with other partners efforts to change harmful attitudes, perceptions and behaviors at a broader societal level.
- Women and girls should be empowered to participate in the technology sector and to inform the design and use of safe online spaces. Private companies, including Internet intermediaries should develop technology which is gender-responsive by design in consultation with women's rights organizations.
- Women and girls who use online spaces should be able to access information on how to ensure their safety online, including information about existing safety protocols.