Portugal

World Health Organization

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22.1 Social determinants of health

23 WHO global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system within a national multisectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children

Chair,

Excellences,

I have the honour to address the 74th World Health Assembly on behalf of Portugal. We align ourselves with the previous statements made by the European Union.

People's living and working conditions are strongly related to health. However, we acknowledge that women and children are often the most affected there.

Portugal recognizes that worldwide, 1 in 3 women suffer from partner or non-partner sexual violence and 1 in 2 children suffer from violence; these actions bring long-lasting implications, physical and mental, and affect families, communities, and nations. These victims are at increased risk of mental conditions, high-risk behaviours, chronic diseases, infectious diseases, social problems, and further involvement in violence.

We acknowledge that COVID-19 has magnified these pre-existing vulnerabilities, especially with the implementation of public health measures, such as lockdowns or schools' closures, aggravating the economic and financial burden and reversing hard-won developmental gains.

Chair,

Portugal reaffirms the need to tackle inequalities through policies that address the social determinants of health and prevent violence on the most vulnerable, while ensuring equitable access to essential health services for all.

To this end, Portugal commits to a national programme on Prevention of Violence across the life cycle. This Program works with 531 local health teams, both in primary and secondary care, for prevention, diagnostic and intervention in cases of violence in children, young people and adults. Eighty-three percent of violence cases are exclusively followed by the health sector. Our health system and data sharing plays an important role in detecting risk situations.

Finally, Portugal calls for global governance, solidarity, and cooperation to ensure universal health coverage to support women and children's rights to the elimination of violence and to achieve the Agenda 2030 sustainable development goals.

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