

## **More than just a reflection, a call to action on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 2020**

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about the best and worst of humanity, sharpened and amplified many of the adverse realities facing the world: hunger, poverty, unemployment and many others, among which, of course, gender-based violence cannot be excluded.

The pandemic has clearly worsened the current situation of women. Firstly, it has impacted on work, between July 2019 and July 2020, women in employment went from 9.2 million to 6.7 million, a decline of 28%. It has further increased the burden of household work for women, who are unrecognized or unpaid, and worse, stigmatized by many societies. It has also caused a deterioration of mental, physical and emotional health, because many, due to confinement, are suffering from depression and anxiety, or have fallen into eating disorders, stress, and even a myriad of diseases that that were previously undiagnosed, or they thought they were cured or apparently in remission.

Beyond these problems, the confinement has exposed the result of broken families... domestic and gender-based violence, and the result of locking up women with their own assailants is devastating during the pandemic, violence of this type has become the second most reported crime in Colombia; So far this year, prosecutors have received more than 60,000 reports of domestic violence, more than 110 women have been murdered and nearly 25,000 women and girls have been victims of sexual violence.

Even though with these figures, the global picture is evidently so disadvantageous for the future of our gender, I have hope when I think there are millions to fight for, that there are millions who need the commitment, effort and actions of those of us who have raised our voices, because it is everyone's task to end violence against women and girls.

While there are mobilizations and activities around this date, they are not enough. It is necessary that all civil society, governments, social and solidarity organizations, public and private enterprises and international organizations, generate public awareness through education, acts large and small, collective and individual, that end violence against women and girls.

From the cooperative movement, from respect, from the reduction of inequalities, from the mitigation of exclusionary language, from justice, from the regulation of weapons... from your house and my house, we can contribute. Let us change the course of tomorrow with today's actions.

**Small actions can have big impacts to put an end to violence against women, for 16 days let's Orange the World together.**

**María Eugenia Pérez Zea, Chair of the ICA Gender Equality Committee**