

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS:  
PREVENTION, SUPPORT & CARE

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## DEFINITIONS

- **Gender-based violence (GBV):** Violence directed towards a woman, because she is a woman, or violence that affects women disproportionately.
- **Violence against women:** Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women.
- **Intimate partner violence:** Behaviour by a current or former intimate partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm.
- **Sexual violence:** Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim.

## RATIONALE 1/2

- **Gender-based violence against adolescents is an important problem:** Among ever-partnered girls aged 15-19, the lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence is 29%. The prevalence of child sexual abuse worldwide is estimated to be approximately 18% for girls and 8% for boys.
- **Gender-based violence against adolescents has major health & social consequences:** It increases girls' risk of unintended pregnancies, induced abortion (often unsafe), the acquisition of HIV and STIs in some settings, adverse mental health outcomes, & is a risk factor for unhealthy behaviour during adolescence & adulthood.

## RATIONALE 2/2

- **Gender-based violence prevention, support & care programmes have been shown to be effective:** Parenting support programmes, school-based dating violence prevention programmes, & community based interventions to build equitable gender norms & attitudes in boys & girls have been shown to be effective. Effective programmes incorporate multisectoral & multilevel action, foster intersectoral coordination, use longer term investments, that repeat exposure to ideas in different settings over time, that place gender power interplay at the core of the content, & respond to those who experience violence with empathy & in a timely manner.
- **However, laws & policies, prevention strategies & their implementation, & access to high quality care & support services need attention:** There is much that needs to be done.



## HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

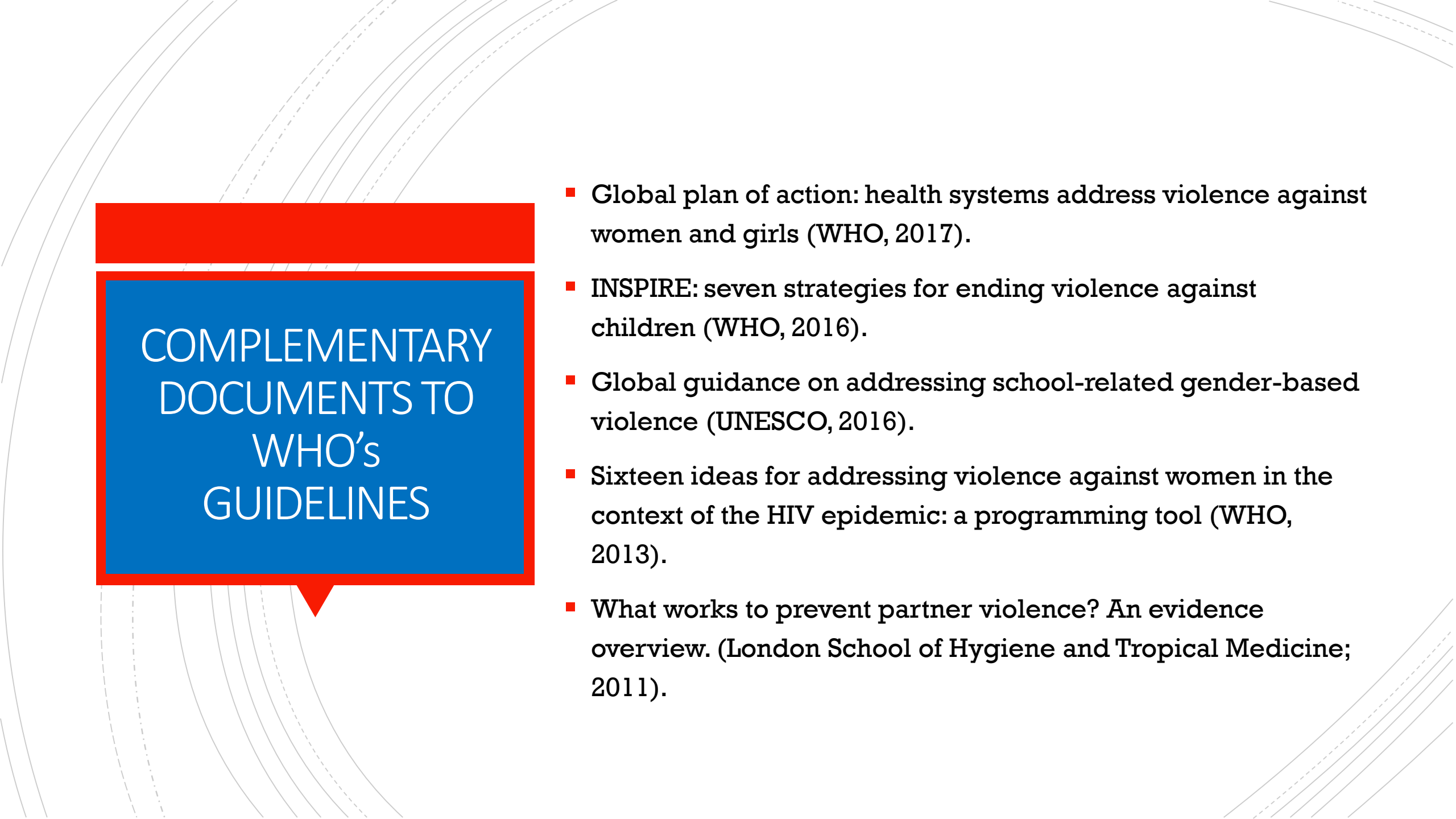
- States are obliged to prevent and address violence against women and girls, providing them with support and care.
- States are obliged to immediately pursue all appropriate means of eliminating gender-based violence.

## KEY CONCEPTS TO CONSIDER

- **Where GBV prevention & response services exist, they are often implemented on a pilot basis & not scaled up; they are piecemeal and not integrated into existing platforms. Further intersectoral coordination is weak:** Support and care for adolescent girls who experience IPV & sexual violence need to be integrated into sexual & reproductive health, HIV, mental health and adolescent health programmes & services.
- **Many health care providers are not prepared to deal with GBV, including on the reporting of sexual abuse:** Training & ongoing support to health care providers are imperative to ensure that care is child-and adolescent centered, age appropriate, responsive to needs of adolescents. & takes into account their evolving capacity in decision making about involving parents and other care givers.
- **Adolescents often do not seek GBV prevention, support and care services:** Raising public awareness on the signs, symptoms & health consequences of IPV & sexual abuse, & on the need , and overcoming stigma is key to changing the situation.

# WHO GUIDELINES

- ***Responding to children and adolescents who have been sexually abused: WHO clinical guidelines (2017).***
- ***Responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women: WHO clinical and policy guidelines (2013).***
- ***WHO guidelines on preventing early pregnancy and poor reproductive outcomes among adolescents in developing countries (2011).***
- ***Consolidated guideline on sexual and reproductive health and rights of women with HIV (2017).***



COMPLEMENTARY  
DOCUMENTS TO  
WHO's  
GUIDELINES

- **Global plan of action: health systems address violence against women and girls (WHO, 2017).**
- **INSPIRE: seven strategies for ending violence against children (WHO, 2016).**
- **Global guidance on addressing school-related gender-based violence (UNESCO, 2016).**
- **Sixteen ideas for addressing violence against women in the context of the HIV epidemic: a programming tool (WHO, 2013).**
- **What works to prevent partner violence? An evidence overview. (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; 2011).**





**Her partner has hurt her.  
Should we send her to  
the police station?**

**Let us care for her first. We can  
then discuss various options so  
that she can decide what she  
wants to do**