UN Women Executive Director kicks off the UNiTE campaign to end gender-based violence during the UN Trust Fund to end Violence Against Women grantee Convention

4 November, Sarajevo—At the first ever grantee Convention of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund), UN Women today kicked off its annual activities for the UN Secretary-General’s UNiTE by 2030 to end Violence against Women campaign in support of the 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. The high-level meeting taking place in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 4-7 November 2019, will bring together the voices of activists and experts who work on innovative solutions to end the pandemic of violence.

For the first time, all current UN Trust Fund grantees will come together with government partners and the private sector to reflect and strategize on how to move the needle on ending violence against women, using their continuous work and experience as the foundation. Violence against women and girls is one of the gravest violations of human rights that affects one in three women in their lifetime, regardless of their social status, class, race, country or age group. Close to 150 participants, from civil society organizations, government partners and the private sector, implementing around 100 projects around the world, will exchange their knowledge, experiences, challenges and learning/s on issues such as prevention, provision of multisectoral services for survivors, implementation of national laws, capacity of small women’s organizations, etc.

UN Women Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, will deliver opening remarks and receive recommendations from civil society organizations developed during the week-long convention. The UN Trust Fund convention takes place in the lead up to important global gatherings taking place in 2020; most notably the 25-year anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, considered the most visionary blueprint on women’s rights and empowerment. This first-of-a-kind convention will be a key opportunity to identify some of the global patterns on what works in eradicating violence against women and girls, and feed into the next year’s review processes.

The convention comes on the heels of the UNiTE to end Violence against Women campaign in support of the 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, which will officially
commence on 25 November, International Day to end Violence against Women, under the theme of: “Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands against Rape!”.

“It is symbolic to kick off this year’s activities for the 16 Days in the context of my visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where so many women and girls experienced sexual violence and rape as a deliberate, suppressive tactic of war. But, even in times of peace, we have witnessed how rape culture continues to be pervasive. As a global community, we can act now to end all forms of sexual violence, including rape, and work together to end discrimination, and I commend everyone to join us in this endeavour,” said UN Women Executive Director.

Today, no country has achieved gender equality, and sexual violence continues to be normalized and embedded in our social environments, despite recent global mobilizations by survivors and activists, such as #MeToo, #TimesUp, #Niunamenos, #NotOneMore, #BalanceTonPorc, and others. The 16 Days of Activism campaign will be calling on people from all walks of life to learn more and take a stand against the pervasive rape culture that surrounds us.

The UN Trust Fund has been working for 22 years on innovative solutions to ending Violence against women in girls. It is the only global grant-making mechanism dedicated to eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls and has supported 517 organizations over the last 22 years with 149 million USD in funding in 139 countries and territories, reaching almost 8 million people last year alone. The recommendations that will be drawn from the convention will also inform the next UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan 2021-2025.