From peace in the home to peace in the world – make education safe for all!

A statement from the Steering Group of the International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN) at the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence 2016

We believe in the inherent dignity of all humanity, male and female, created in the image of God. We are well aware, however, of the way in which women and girls are still discriminated against globally. From human trafficking and domestic violence to massive discrepancies in the provision of safe education, for many women and girls worldwide, the situation is increasingly dire.

The UN's new Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls has a target to end to end all forms of violence against all women by 2030. This is unlikely to become possible without access to safe, quality education for all children, since education makes a huge impact on the likelihood of a woman becoming subject to violence.

Across the world, up to 15 million girls are unlikely to ever set foot inside a classroom (UN Girls Education Initiative, 2015). Many of those who are able to access education are subject to harassment, discrimination, and assault. Education plays a vital role in helping women and girls realise their potential – economically, politically, and socially. In denying safe education to so many girls, we are denying them the opportunity to reach their full, God-given potential.

IAWN celebrates and gives thanks to God for the increase in participation in the 16 Days by Provinces, dioceses and parishes around the Anglican Communion. We recommit ourselves to working for gender justice, especially calling to mind Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) resolution 15.07 on Gender-based and Domestic Violence and resolution 15.10 on the trafficking of persons, both of which were reaffirmed during the April 2016 meeting of the ACC in Lusaka, in resolution 16.03 on Gender Equality and Justice.

We long to see all Anglicans fully aware of the transformative work needed to ensure that all girls and boys, women and men are empowered to live and work in relationships that reflect Christian values of love, dignity, and justice. We call on the Provinces and Churches of the Anglican Communion to act against school-related gender-based violence both in prayer and action, believing that educating girls is a key way of recognising their inherent God-given dignity.

We dedicate ourselves as a network to working for equality in education for all children, and we look for the day when schools are a safe experience for everyone, and gender equality is a reality for all.

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