Across the world, violence against women and girls remains one of the most flagrant and most tolerated human rights violations. Violence affects all groups of women in every community and every country, however girls are uniquely vulnerable.

We believe in the importance of hearing firsthand voices and experiences of girls. We are committed to valuing girls’ expertise in discussing their own lives. U-Report is a social messaging platform where anyone can SPEAK OUT and be heard on issues they care about. WAGGGS works with girls and young women to design U-Report polls on issues they care about. We amplify girls’ voices by showcasing their opinions, and their solutions, to global issues, such as gender-based violence.

78% of girls thought sexual violence against women and girls was increasing in their community & the world

For girls, harassment in the street and on public transport is a daily reality. This mostly goes unreported and unchallenged. It is often seen as acceptable.

Public places like schools and playgrounds are designed for young people. They should be the spaces where girls feel safest. When these spaces become places of harassment or abuse, we should not put up with it. The louder our voice, the bigger our impact.

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Governments must:

• Invest in data collection efforts to understand the nature and scale of violence against girls and to track progress. Only 41 per cent of countries regularly produce such data, and data on girls is particularly limited.
• Adopt, strengthen and enforce laws and policies on gender-based violence. Don’t allow perpetrators walk away with impunity!
• Adopt legislation that criminalises street harassment, including verbal harassment and unwanted advances.
• Challenge harmful social norms, by working with faith leaders and communities, and organising public awareness and education campaigns that address inequality and condemn violence. Legislation alone is not enough.
• Integrate education on gender equality and healthy relationships as part of school curricula.
• Meet the needs of girl survivors of violence by providing services, programmes and responses that take into account the best interests of the child.

Today, the number of countries that have legislation against different forms of gender-based violence is unprecedented. Elimination of gender-based violence features high on national and international agendas, yet 78 per cent of respondents to our recent poll believed that sexual violence was on increase in their community.

To mark 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, WAGGGS’ #GirlsAreUnsafe campaign asked girls to draw and share the places where they felt most unsafe. Their voices were amplified by the results from our global poll on violence. The hundreds of drawings and data received are a stark reminder of a daily reality for girls across the world.

 Violence against girls is neither acceptable nor inevitable. Violence is entrenched in harmful social norms and sustained by deeply rooted ideology of male power and privilege. Unless these are tackled, millions of girls remain unsafe – in the streets, on public transport, at school and at home.

Governments have the ultimate responsibility of protecting girls whether in public or in private spaces.

Girls expect nothing short of brave and decisive actions from their Governments. They deserve nothing less than a peaceful childhood, a life free from violence and harassment and an opportunity to be the best they can be. They will accept no further excuses.

70% GIRLS SAID THE STREET WAS THE MOST UNSAFE PLACE IN THEIR COMMUNITY

68% OF GIRLS SAID THEY FELT MOST UNSAFE IN THE DARK

For girls, harassment in the street and on public transport is a daily reality. This mostly goes unreported and unchallenged. It is often seen as acceptable.

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U-Report is designed by the UNICEF Global Innovation centre.
It starts young. It’s pervasive. It happens everywhere, in epidemic proportions. Girls told us they feel most unsafe in these spaces:

- 51% Street
- 20% Public Transport
- 13% Parks and Playgrounds
- 6% Leisure Spaces
- 4% School
- 4% Home

Girls expect nothing short of brave and decisive actions from Governments.