

BREAK- ING THE CYCLE



Understanding and Addressing
Violence Against Women

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Violence against women takes different forms

- Intimate partner violence (sexual, physical, emotional violence)
- Sexual violence by non-partners
- Sexual harassment & abuse in public spaces, work-place, educational institutions, etc.
- Forced prostitution and sexual trafficking
- Sexual violence in conflict situations
- Femicide
- Harmful traditional practices: early/forced marriage, female genital mutilation, dowry-related violence, 'honor' crimes

Intimate partner violence is the most prevalent form of violence against women



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Why focus on violence against women?



- It's often invisible
- It's socially acceptable
- Survivors face barriers when seeking help
- Criminal sanctions are limited and law enforcement is weak



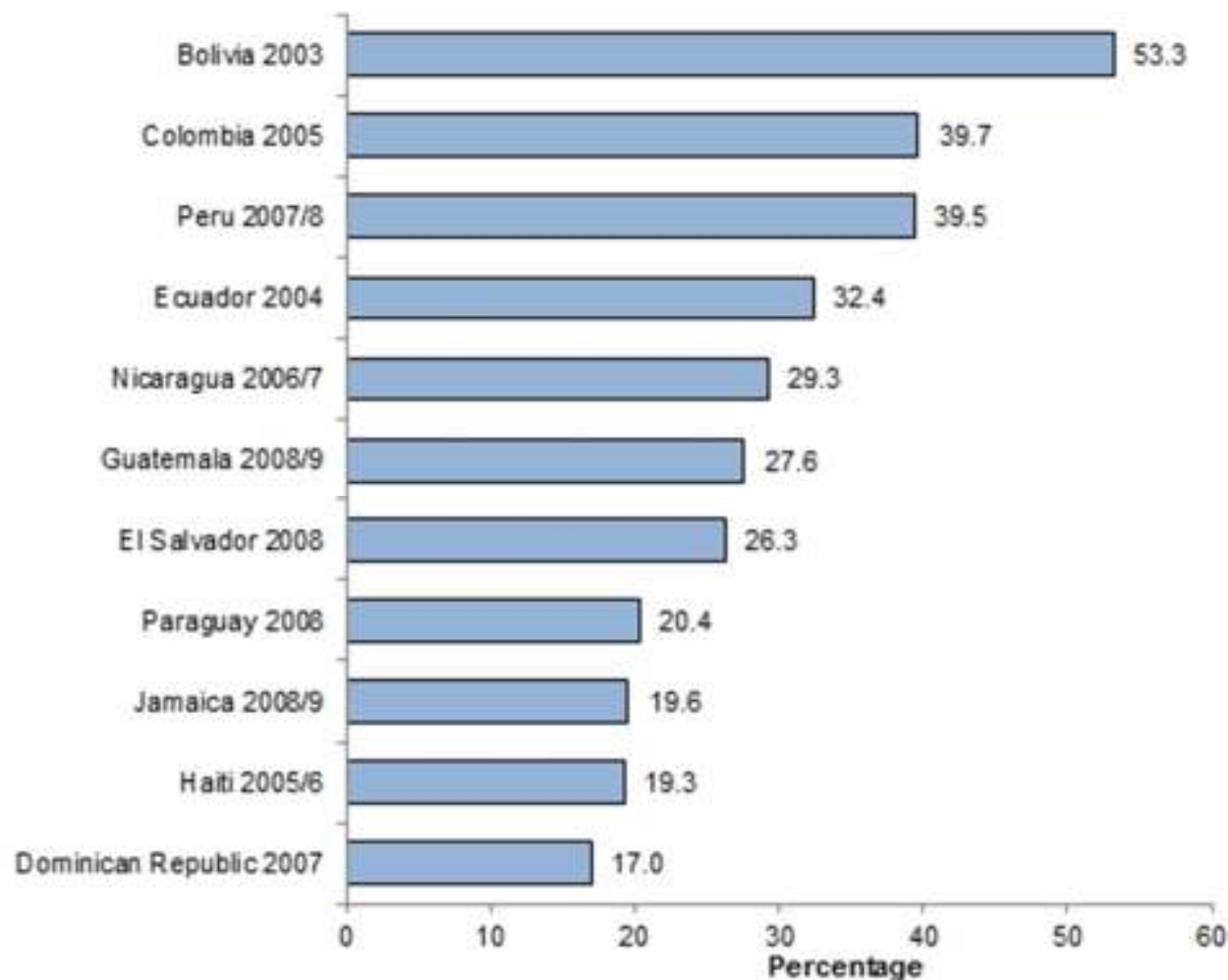
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Partner violence affects a substantial number of women

% of women (15-49) who reported physical or sexual intimate partner violence ever



Source: Bott S, Guedes A, Goodwin M, Mendoza JA (2012) Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: A comparative analysis of population-based data from 12 countries. Washington, DC. Pan American Health Organization. Available at: paho.org/violence.

What are some of the risk factors associated with intimate partner violence in our region?



- Urban residence
- Being divorced or separated
- Being currently or recently employed
- High parity (number of live births)

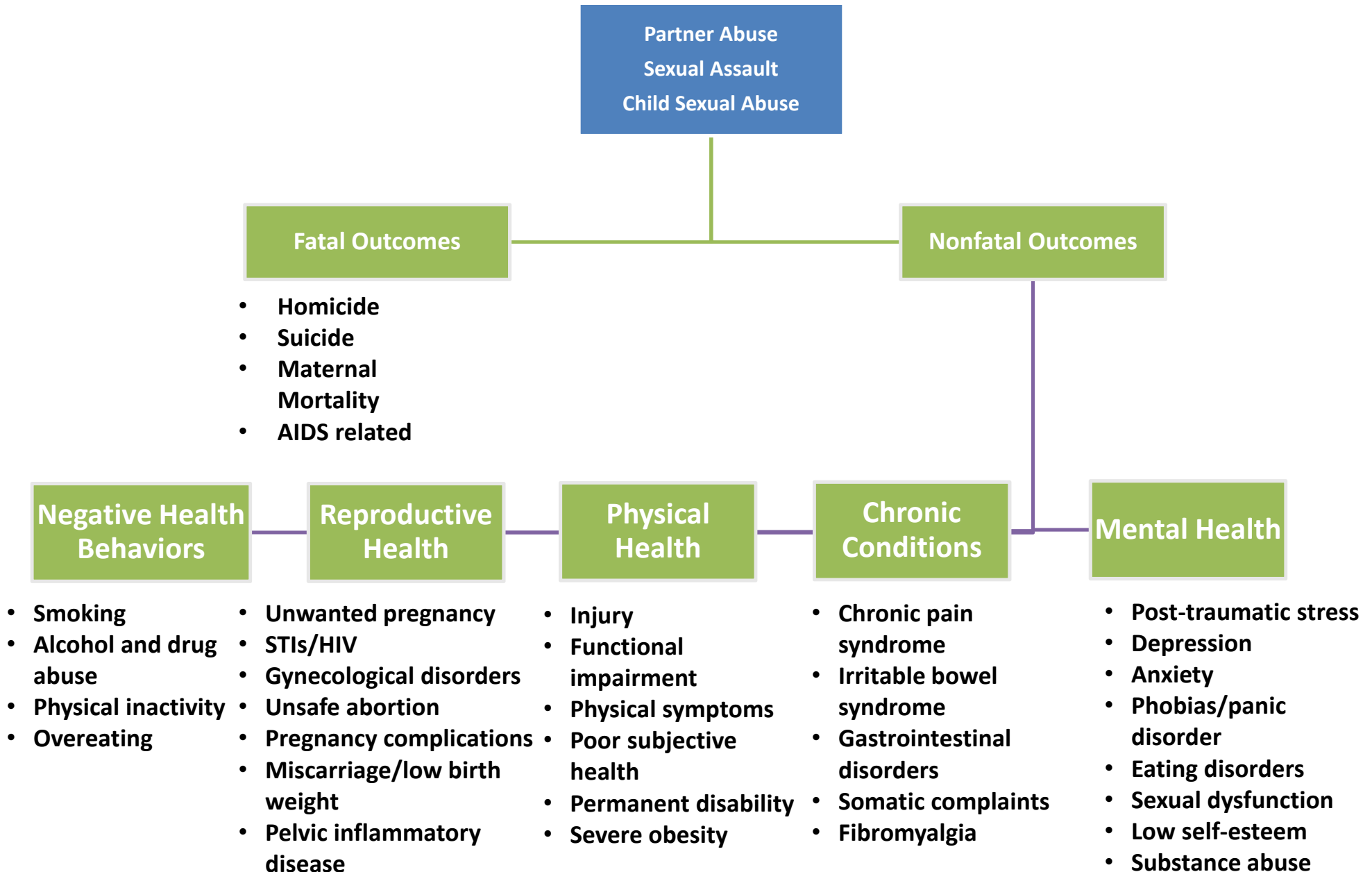


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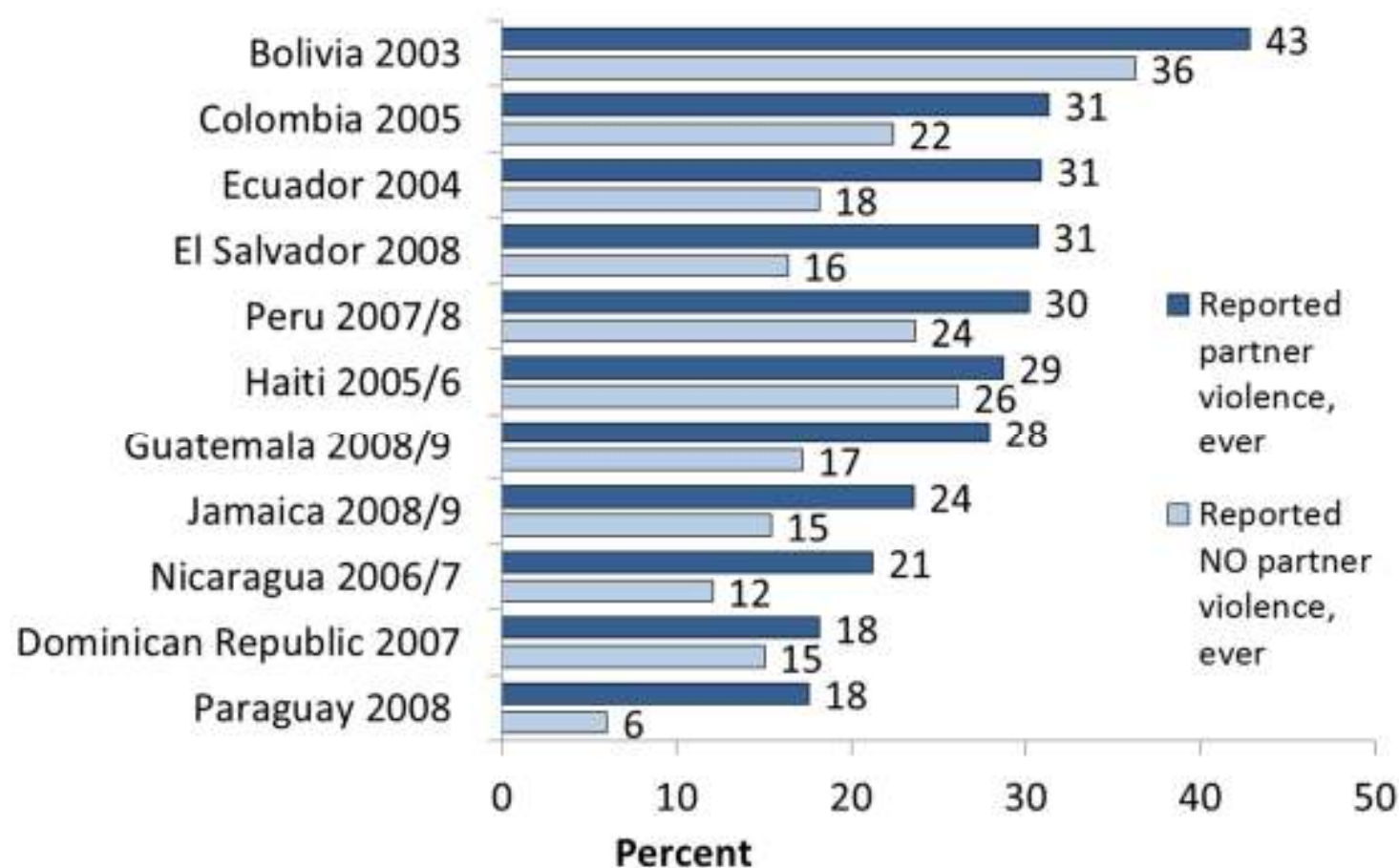
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Health related consequences of VAW



Intimate partner violence is associated with unwanted pregnancies

% of women (15-49) who reported at least 1 unwanted pregnancy in the last 5 years, according to experience of partner violence



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Partner violence can be an important cause of maternal mortality



- 3% to 44% of pregnant women experience partner violence in LAC (Han et al. Intl J Gynecology and Obstetrics 2014)
- USA (3 cities): intimate partner violence was the main cause of maternal mortality, responsible for up to 20% of MM from 1993-1998 (Campbell j et al. Violence Against Women 2004)
- Canada (1 province): hemorrhage was 3 times more frequent among pregnant women exposed to violence (Janssen PA, et al. Am J Obstet Gynecol. 2003)

Violence against women affects children



- In households where women are abused, children are more likely to be punished harshly (hitting, beating, spanking)
- Children who suffer physical or sexual violence have higher risks of perpetrating (boys) or suffering (girls) partner violence in adulthood
- Children who witness violence against their mothers/stepmothers also have higher risks of perpetrating (boy) or suffering (girls) partner violence in adulthood

Why should the health sector address violence against women?



- Human rights imperative
- Affects significant number of women
- Significant cause of injury and ill health to women and children
- Poses considerable costs to health sector and beyond



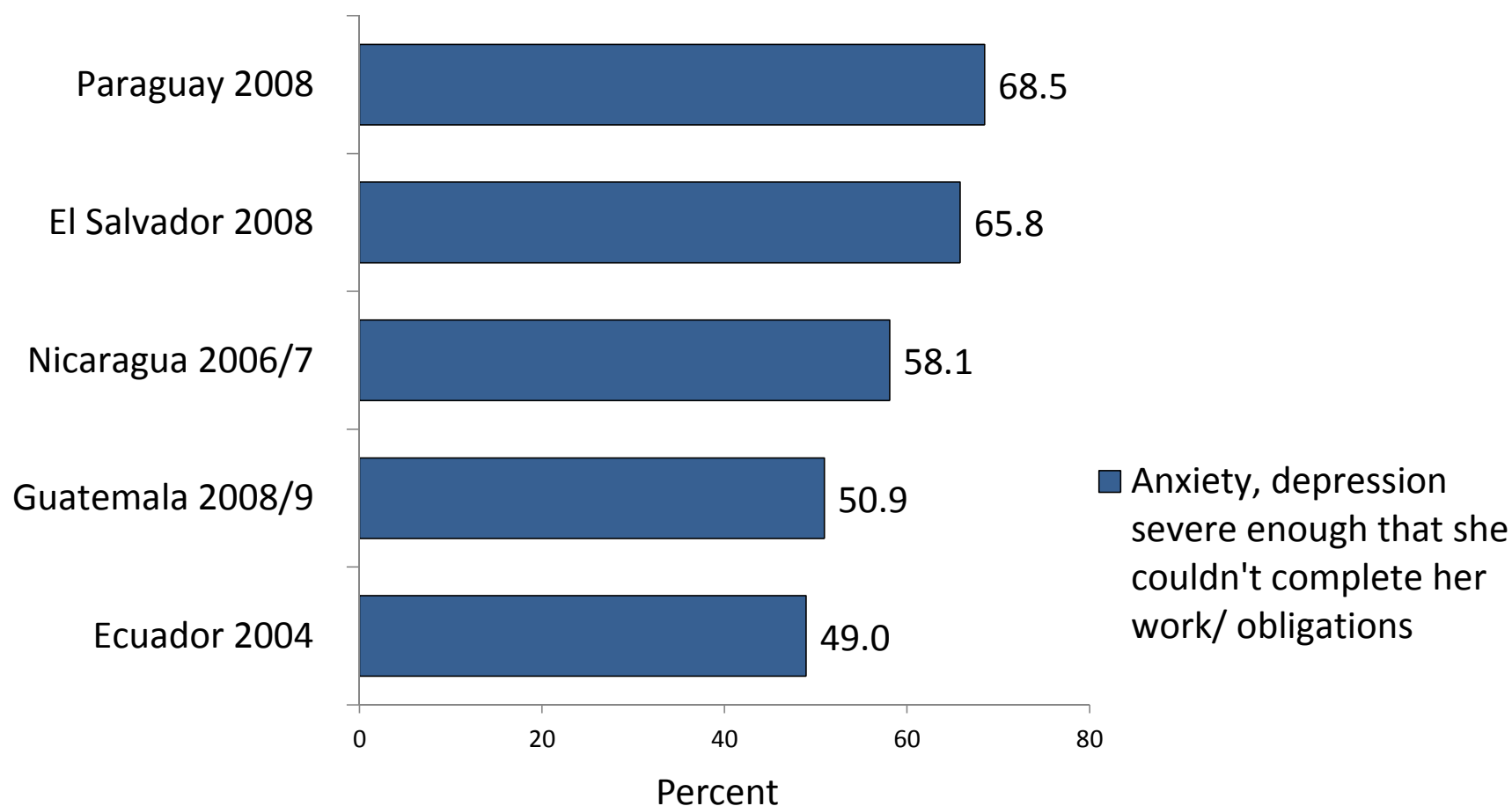
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IPV is associated with depression and missed work

% of women who reported anxiety or depression severe enough that they could not complete work as a result of partner violence



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What can the health sector do?



- Provide comprehensive health services to survivors:
 - Assess danger and assist with safety planning
 - Provide psychosocial support, emergency contraception, post-exposure prophylaxis for STI/HIV
 - Refer to external services (legal, social, etc.)
- Collect data about prevalence, risk factors, and health consequences
- Inform policies to address violence against women
- Promote and inform primary prevention efforts

What is PAHO/WHO doing to prevent and respond to violence against women?



- Improving the quality, dissemination and use of data for evidence-based policy and programming

- Strengthening capacity for preventing violence against women and violence against children



- Improving the health sector response to violence against women and violence against children

- Supporting the development and revision of national policies, plans and protocols



TOGETHER WE CAN END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Thank you for listening!

