FACTS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:

- Violence against women (VAW) is a major public health problem and violation of women's human rights.

- Global estimates published by WHO indicate that about 1 in 3 (35%) women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime.¹

- Violence can negatively affect women's physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health.²

- A large-scale survey of working women suggests that approximately 1 of every 2 women will be harassed at some point during working lives.³

- Women often cite economic opportunities as being the single most important and desired intervention to address domestic violence.

- Globally, women perform 66% of the world's work, earn 10% of the world's income and own less than 1% of the world's property.⁴

Violence against women under international human rights law and in international agreements:

- General Recommendation No.19 on VAW CEDAW Committee
- UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW)
- The Beijing Platform for Action
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5)
- Other core human rights treaties

IMPACT:

The effects of violence against women are far reaching, ranging from immediate to long-term physical, sexual and mental consequences for women and girls, including death. VAW negatively affects women’s health and general well-being and prevents women from fully participating in society.
Simavi is dedicated to supporting “A Healthy Life for All” in the communities where we work, developing and supporting programmes in partnership to create a supportive environment, increase access to quality services, and empower communities. Simavi is committed to ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) and strives for a world where women and girls are valued members of their communities, live free from violence and can take decisions over their own bodies and general health. Empowering women economically can reduce the risk of violence by improving her autonomy.

Women’s opportunities to access resources are more limited and often, the resources that are available are controlled by men. Limited rights to inheritance and land ownership, combined with restricted education and economic opportunities, and social norms and expectations regarding marriage, expose women to economic, physical, sexual and emotional violence from the men on whom they depend. Simavi recognises that the gender-specific social and economic barriers that women and girls face have a significant impact on their health and well-being. In turn, these barriers negatively affect their social and economic opportunities. In particular, the fact that women and girls do not fully control their sexual and reproductive health has multiple, connected impacts. Early and repeated pregnancies threaten women’s health and reduce their capacity to engage in economic activity. These limitations regarding economic resources reduce their access to health services, including reproductive health services, and ability to manage their menstrual hygiene well. For adolescent girls, limited access to products and facilities during menstruation disrupts their education, further reducing their future opportunities for economic empowerment.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is one of the most common forms of violence against women and is often characterized by long-term, cyclical patterns of abuse, increased isolation from the outside world and limited personal freedom and access to resources. Within a relationship, money is often used as a tool of control and, without it, women have less opportunities to control their lives and escape their situation. The risk for abuse becomes greater when a woman is separated from supportive networks, especially friendships and support with other women, and from services that might support her. For this reason it is important to address both economic and social empowerment.

The disadvantages women and girls face are multi-faceted, and exist within boundaries set by social norms, community expectations, and institutional systems and structures. These multiple barriers and challenges can be seen in the small scale and artisanal gold mining sector, where conditions remain especially challenging for women.
Violence against women in the gold mining sector:
Evidence indicates that men control and benefit from access to land for mining, incomes, credit, and mining and household commodities, thus limiting women’s opportunities. Women in mines are frequently paid less than men for the same work and face barriers accessing different and better paid positions. Reproductive roles, limited access to health services and socio-cultural norms in communities further prevent women benefitting from mining and other economic activities. Sexual harassment, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and transactional sex are common, thus exposing women to unsolicited sex, unwanted pregnancy and the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).6 The high incidence of transactional sex and SGBV - both a cause and consequence of gender inequality7 - significantly impacts women’s health and wellbeing.8

Experiences of gender based violence from female miners

“Miners were all over me, they were abusive, grabby and lusty but I had to put up with all that evil”, she commented.

“ She worked in one of the large mining company’s. After a few years, there was a job opening in another position in the same mine, which she applied for. The supervisor in charge of the recruitment contacted her with the information that she had done very well but there were other equally qualified people, so if she really wants the job, she would have to satisfy him sexually to be able to get the job.”

Going for Gold programme
Going for Gold is a five-year programme working towards economic empowerment of women living in and around artisanal and small-scale gold mining communities in Western Region, Ghana, and Geita district, Tanzania. Simavi will work together with Solidaridad and Healthy Entrepreneurs to achieve the programme objectives. Solidaridad will work with ASGM miners to achieve fair mining practices in support of women’s rights and needs. Simavi and Healthy Entrepreneurs will focus on working with gold communities to ensure women’s improved sexual and reproductive health and to create an environment in which communities, health workers, and authorities recognize women’s health rights.

1 WHO, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, South African Medical Research Council, Global and regional estimates of violence against women, Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, 2013
2 Ibid, para 1
4 Source: World Bank
6 http://www.avert.org/hiv-aids-tanzania.htm
CALL FOR ACTION

GOVERNMENTS RESPONSE:
- Establish and implement gender strategies, under the SDG framework.
- Remove discriminatory legislation and provide a positive policy and legal environment that supports women’s economic empowerment, including: minimum wages, equal pay for work of equal value, maternity protection and paid parental leave. Setting and enforcing effective laws to protect women from violence and exploitation at work.
- Creating an enabling environment for decent work for all.
- Deliver gender-smart employment and procurement practices.
- Recognize women worker organizations and create structures where they can be represented.
- Provide adequate support to enable women to work productively, and infrastructure that supports women’s safe access to economic opportunities.
- Invest in norm change campaigns and support community-level norm change programmes, including through education.

MINING COMPANIES RESPONSE:
- Urgently address discrimination, implicit bias, abuse and health and safety issues in their workforce and ensure that suppliers do the same.
- Create enabling environments for female employees to succeed through flexible work options, family-friendly policies, equal pay for work of equal value, as well as training, mentoring and sponsorship.
- Invest in initiatives to reduce and redistribute unpaid care and work.
- Promote positive role-modelling of economically empowered women and leaders.
- Integrate and support women, women-owned enterprises and women’s collective enterprises in the supply chain.
- Challenge stereotypes and taboos within the workplace through dialogue, advertising and media communications.
- Map and monitor performance on gender equality in mining operations, including throughout supply chains, and share success stories to inspire others in a race to the top.
- Adopt the Women’s Empowerment Principles.

CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONSE:
- Work with women, particularly the most marginalized, to amplify their voices and support representative organizations to negotiate with local and national government and other bodies.
- Encourage women’s participation and leadership in trades unions, organizations.
- Bring together women for networking and mentoring.
- Take forward advocacy and strategic litigation to protect the rights of informal, or otherwise vulnerable, workers.