INTERNATIONAL DAY against violence and bullying at school including cyberbullying

Key messages

- Each year, the International day against violence and bullying at school will be observed on the first Thursday of November. It calls on all countries, organizations and people to come together with the common purpose of ensuring schools are free from fear and violence.

- This International day aims to eliminate violence and bullying at school including cyberbullying, so that all children and young people can fulfil their right to education, health and well-being.

- **The theme for the International Day in 2020 is Together against bullying in school.** Bullying affects students of all ages, in all countries and regions across the world. Almost one in three students have been bullied in the past month, making it the most prevalent form of violence in schools. One in ten students has been cyberbullied, and this form of bullying is on the rise.

- The consequences are serious: Students who are frequently bullied are nearly three times more likely to feel like an outsider at school and more than twice as likely to miss school as those who are not frequently bullied. They have worse educational outcomes and are also more likely to leave formal education after finishing secondary school. They are twice as likely to feel lonely, to be unable to sleep at night and to have contemplated suicide.

- Physical appearance is the top reason for bullying, followed by ethnicity, nationality and skin colour. Students who are seen as 'different' in any way are more at risk of bullying, such as girls perceived to look or act like boys, or boys perceived to look or act like girls.

- Too many people think bullying at school including cyberbullying is an inevitable rite of passage to adulthood and that is relatively harmless and that little can be done to stop it. Instead, there is strong evidence that violence and bullying at school including cyberbullying can be prevented, and effectively addressed if it happens. No student should live in fear of going to school.

- School communities and the broader education sector must work together in unison to prevent and address bullying. This is called a whole-education approach, and includes:

    - Strong leadership and robust policy frameworks;
    - curricula to promote a caring school climate;
    - training for teachers and other school staff;
    - a safe psychological and physical school environment
    - mechanisms to report bullying and support for affected students;
    - student empowerment and participation;
    - involvement of all stakeholders in the school community including parents; and
    - collaboration between the education sector and other sectors and a wide range of partners.

- Addressing all forms of school violence including bullying is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and SDG 16, which aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies.