



# SVRI Forum 2017

Sexual Violence Research Initiative

18th -21st September 2017

Rio | Brazil



## **Welcome to SVRI Forum 2017**

### **Dear Colleagues and Friends,**


It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum 2017. I thank you all for joining us in this beautiful city of Rio de Janeiro.

The SVRI Coordinating Group took a decision a few years back to hold the Forum in Latin America and the Caribbean. At that time, this decision felt like a remote dream, but look at us now – here we are holding our fifth global conference in Rio.

The field is on a cusp of major change - new knowledge is being generated on an unprecedented scale, whilst the Forum takes place at time when the world has embarked on the Sustainable Development Goals which for the first time recognize the importance of addressing violence against women and violence against children for sustainable development. The SVRI Forum 2017 is a timely space to discuss and share strategies for achieving SDG targets aimed at ending all forms of violence against women and against children.

The theme for the Forum is partnerships for policy action. Sexual violence and intimate partner violence are complex problems requiring complex solutions – there is no one group or innovation that will solve the problem. We need multiple players, working in partnership across multiple platforms over a long period of time.

We encourage you to use the SVRI Forum to renew old partnerships, strengthen existing ones and embark on new ones. It is your platform for cross-sectoral, cross-discipline deliberation and debate. Take time to reach out to others – work together to develop shared understandings / language to talk about sexual violence and other forms of violence; extend your understanding of what are effective, evidence informed response and prevention programmes; and take what you have learnt to further strengthen your research, funding programmes and response and prevention programmes.



We have a diverse programme - with over 345 presentations from across all regions of the world on sexual violence, intimate partner violence, violence against children, and under-researched populations and regions. There are presentations on new studies and innovative approaches and new ways in which violence is being perpetrated through virtual platforms – but also the positive role of virtual spaces for responding to and preventing violence.

New this year is a theme on young people and participatory methods. A number of young people are at the Forum for the first time. A big shout out to the young people present...we are happy you are here with us helping to ensure youth voices are “Being Heard”. The young people will engage in the event in multiple ways - please do say hi and discuss with them ways in which to engage young people in your research.

Your comments and ideas for strengthening the Forum have been considered. We have added interactive content panels where intervention developers will share the content of their intervention. For those developing interventions, these panels provide time to discuss what we need to consider when doing so.

We have introduced a new format called the “Science Pitch” – a short presentation on your research using an electronic version poster. This means that, posters are now integrated into the main conference programme and costs have been reduced as you no longer have to print or transport your poster. We hope that through pursuing the Science Pitch approach we are building the field by giving you an opportunity to showcase your research in one or two sentences. We know this may be challenging but the Forum is the place for us to try out new things.

Other presentation styles and formats have been integrated into the oral programme – with some panels adopting a moderated discussion approach to explore the research and implications of the findings for the field. We continue to strive to address North-South inequities in research – we have asked presenters to ensure where possible and appropriate the involvement of local partners in Forum presentations.

The Forum is and must remain a protected safe space for all of us. We do this work because we care. Sometimes, because we care, this work can be emotionally hard. The topics presented, the discussions we have, can trigger strong emotions. None of us are immune. Information on online / phone in counselling services is available in your conference bags. There is also information on preventing vicarious trauma in your conference bags. Should you need additional support please let someone from the SVRI team know and they will link you up with support.

An event of this magnitude cannot come into being without the support of many sponsors and partners – all the Forum partners and sponsors, abstract reviewers, technical advisory groups, pre-conference workshop facilitators and others are listed in the conference programme. Please accept my heartfelt thanks for your tireless support and generosity. In partnership we will succeed - our loyal and supportive partners ensure that SVRI Forum 2017 - partnerships for policy action continues to be a roaring success.

Thank you again.....

Our union makes us stronger....A união faz a força

Dr Claudia Garcia-Moreno, Chair, SVRI Forum 2017, SVRI Coordinating Group

Team leader, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organization