



The Activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
to Eliminate Violence against Women

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(Check against delivery)

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Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates, colleagues and friends:

I am honoured to have the opportunity to address this 53rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and to present to you the Note from the Secretary-General on the Activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to eliminate violence against women, which also includes a report on the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (A/HRC/10/43- E/CN.6/2009/10).

I am pleased to present this year's report in the context of system-wide efforts to advance the Secretary-General's UNite to End Violence against Women Campaign, which gives high-level support to efforts by UN partners, governments, and women's and other civil society organizations to make commitments a reality by 2015, alongside achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals.

The report before you complements both the UNite campaign and the Secretary-General's 2006 in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1), which documented the nature and scope of the problem, the laws and action plans countries have adopted to end it, and the budgetary resources needed for implementation. Responding to General Assembly resolutions in 2006 (61/143) and 2008 (63/155) that call on the international community to deepen support for national efforts to end violence against women and urge increased support to the UN Trust Fund, the report highlights the catalytic work that the Trust Fund is supporting in partnership with Member States, UN partners and women's and civil society organizations to strengthen institutional capacity to implement national laws and action plans to end violence against women; mobilize men, youth, religious and community leaders; advocate for needed budgetary allocations; and set up data collection systems and indicators to monitor and track implementation.

Increased attention to implementation highlights the need for a comprehensive approach, one that works across sectors and at multiple levels to bring about sustainable change. The focus of the Commission in this session on sharing responsibilities and decision-making between men and women reflects this need to work at all levels, reaching

beyond public agenda setting to understand and reshape household and community decision-making and care-giving responsibilities.

Mr. Chairperson and distinguished delegates: Since its inception, the UN Trust Fund has been a key global mechanism for supporting model strategies to end violence against women and girls. Grantees benefit from the technical assistance, synergies and opportunities available through the work of UNIFEM and the United Nations system to eliminate violence against women and girls. The UN Trust Fund is the only global grant-making mechanism to unite so many UN agencies at the global and sub-regional levels to review strategies for addressing violence against women and girls.

The 2005-2008 UN Trust Fund strategy introduced measures to enhance its effectiveness, in line with the need for strengthened monitoring and evaluation and effective institutional mechanisms at all levels to ensure coordination, action and accountability. My remarks today will highlight progress in implementing this strategy in 2008, focusing on impact, involvement, efficiency, knowledge management and resource mobilization.

Enhancing impact. In order to bridge the gap in realizing national and international commitments to end violence against women, UN Trust Fund grants focus on supporting implementation of national laws, policies and action plans. In so doing it also contributes to the five outcomes of the Secretary-General's Unite Campaign – including the enforcement of national laws, the implementation of multi-sectoral action plans, support to data collection systems, social mobilization and prevention strategies, and addressing sexual violence in conflict situations. In 2008, grantee initiatives included increasing the capacity of the judiciary, law enforcement and health service providers, creating and strengthening data collection systems and indicators, building multi-sectoral partnerships and increasing attention to the links between violence against women and the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Deepening involvement. Eliminating violence against women and girls rests on mobilizing broad-based partnerships and multi-stakeholder alliances. In addition to grantees, who play central roles in mobilizing local and national stakeholders around the issue of ending violence against women and girls, UN Member States are essential UN Trust Fund partners through their role as key stakeholders, providing high-level policy direction and support at the national and international levels.

The UN Trust Fund is also built on the concept of United Nations partnerships, which are assured through the coordinating role of over 20 members of the inter-agency programme appraisal committees.¹ In 2008, sub-regional programme appraisal committees met in Barbados, Brazil, Ecuador, Fiji, Ghana, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal,

¹ In 2008, committee members included the Division for the Advancement of Women; the Economic Commission for Africa; the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; the UN Food and Agriculture Organization; the International Labour Organization; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS; the UN Convention to Combat Desertification; the UN Development Programme; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the UN Human Settlements Programme; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the UN Office on Drugs and Crime; the UN Population Fund (UNFPA); the World Food Programme; the World Health Organization; the World Bank; and UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, along with leading civil society experts.

Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, South Africa and Thailand. As UN Trust Fund administrator, UNIFEM continues to explore opportunities for expanded UN country team roles in enhancing its effectiveness and impact, especially at the country level.

Ensuring efficiency. Across its operations, the UN Trust Fund relies on minimal staffing and infrastructure so that maximum resources are directed to country-level initiatives. In addition, resources are directly channeled to local government and civil society organization partners. The inter-agency project appraisal process also enables linkages to existing UN efforts and national priorities. This decentralized and broadly participatory structure helps ensure that funding allocation conforms closely to the capacities and needs of diverse countries and regions.

As UN Trust Fund resources continue to grow, a shift to larger and longer-term grants allows the more efficient use of resources in its administration. While grants initially averaged \$50,000 for two years, moving to \$100,000 to \$300,000 for two to three years in 2007, 2008 was the first time that grants were as high as \$1 million for two to three years. The time and labour required to review, approve, monitor and support grantees is therefore more cost-effective in relation to the results and impacts expected of larger-scale initiatives.

Generating knowledge. The UN Trust Fund has been investing in generating new knowledge and nurturing innovation and models for up-scaling, in order to expand the global knowledge base on effective approaches of ‘how to’ end violence against women and girls. In this way it is uniquely placed to function as a global observatory of emerging good practices, contributing to programming excellence, maximization of results and efficient use of resources. For example, under the HIV and AIDS window, particular emphasis has been placed on ensuring a rigorous monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure that lessons learned are widely available and shared. At the end of three years, it aims to have produced a tool for cross-country evidence-based learning and programming to effectively deploy strategies to respond to the linkages between violence against women and HIV and AIDS.

In 2008, UNIFEM and UN HABITAT expanded a programme that was originally supported by the UN Trust Fund to create “Safe Cities” for women in Argentina and Peru, and expanded into a Latin American regional programme in 2006. Motivated by the enthusiastic response of local authorities and civil society organizations, UNIFEM developed a global initiative to refine a model of how local authorities, working in tandem with communities and women’s organizations, can prevent violence against women and girls in public spaces through participatory processes and practical measures. The programme’s longer-term intention of promoting the model for wide adaptation and up-scaling by local governments encapsulates its full impact potential to reduce gender-based violence, further women’s empowerment and enhance the quality of city life for all. A Methodological Intervention Model has been developed in the cities of Rosario in Argentina, Bogotá in Colombia and Santiago de Chile in Chile, and new work proposals have been developed for Haiti and Brazil.

Mobilizing resources. Overall funding for initiatives to address violence against women is on the rise, evidenced by the rapid growth of the UN Trust Fund resource base over the past few years. Between 1996 and 2004, the UN Trust Fund received just under \$10 million in

total contributions. For the period 2005-2008, total contributions, including pledges, have amounted to a total of \$40 million, with \$22 million available for grant-making in 2008.

I would like to thank Member States who contributed in 2008, including Australia, Austria, Brazil, Finland, Ireland, Lichtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States of America; as well as the Avon Empowerment Fund, Johnson and Johnson and Tag Hauer; the UN Foundation, Cinema for Peace Foundation, Zonta International and UNIFEM National Committees from Austria, Iceland, Italy, and the United States of America. UNIFEM's Goodwill Ambassador, Nicole Kidman, has committed to mobilizing individual and corporate support, including as spokesperson for UNIFEM's "Say NO to Violence against Women" campaign.

The increase in annual contributions, however, still lags behind the needs and demands at country level. In 2008, the UN Trust Fund was still only able to meet 4 per cent of the more than 1,000 proposals, worth over \$525 million, received in requests for support. In order to meet the increasing demand, the UN Trust Fund has set an annual target of at least \$100 million by 2015, a benchmark adopted by the Secretary General's UNite to End Violence against Women Campaign.

A Life Free of Violence: UNIFEM programming to end violence against women

In addition to administering the UN Trust Fund, UNIFEM continues to broker partnerships, inter-agency collaboration and pioneering approaches to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. In line with its Strategic Plan 2008-2011, UNIFEM has developed a strategy to build on the momentum generated by the Secretary-General's campaign to accelerate progress towards implementation. "A life free of violence: unleashing the power of women's empowerment and gender equality," focuses on advocacy and awareness-raising; policy and legal reform; addressing the linkages between violence against women and HIV and AIDS; and developing capacities to increase access to services and justice for survivors.

UNIFEM has also identified emerging areas for greater attention, such as incorporating the issue of violence against women and girls into leading policy and funding frameworks; aligning informal and formal justice systems with international human rights standards; addressing sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations; and developing targeted prevention approaches, especially with key groups, such as men and adolescents.

Integrating the issue of violence against women into national development and funding frameworks and strengthening national action plans on violence against women and girls, in particular, can provide ways to set in place the institutional, technical and financial resources required for effective coordinated responses. UNIFEM has supported those processes in a number of countries, for example, with its contribution to the development of a national strategy and plan on gender-based violence in Afghanistan.

Thank you for your attention.