

**Remarks by Carolyn Hannan, Director  
Division for the Advancement of Women**

**At the  
Performance of MIKA  
a theatrical production on violence against women  
On the occasion of the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women  
UN headquarters, 5 March**

We have just had the privilege to experience the beautiful performance of MIKA, which clearly illustrates the power of the theatre and the potential for artists to provoke discussion and facilitate change. I am honored to thank *Tiyatroglobal* as a collective, and each individual artist personally, for this tremendous contribution to the Secretary-General's campaign "*UNiTE to End Violence Against Women*."

When the Secretary-General launched his campaign at the Commission on the Status of Women last year, he called on all stakeholders to support him in his mission to eradicate violence against women. *Tiyatroglobal* heard this call and responded in full – preparing this play specifically as a contribution from the creative arts. It was both deeply moving and disturbing – it created a tremendous sense of the loss, fear and pain caused by violence against women, not only for individuals but also for families and communities.

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Our panel this evening builds on the powerful message we received through MIKA and explores how the arts and media can contribute to addressing violence against women and girls.

All of us here tonight are aware that violence against women is an extreme manifestation of pervasive discrimination which occurs in all countries at all stages of development, and threatens the rights and well-being of women, both rich and poor. We have heard the statistics before – that one in three women is beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. We know that in armed conflict and its aftermath women are subjected to horrendous forms of violence. We all know the devastating long-term effects that this can have - not only on women but also on their families and their communities. And we are aware that most victims suffer in silence, with little or no recourse to justice, care or support.

We are also increasingly aware that violence against women constrains the achievement of human rights, development and peace and security, and we do not need convincing of the importance of the Secretary-General's mission to eradicate violence against women. But there are many who are not aware and who do need some convincing. It is therefore important to find new and creative ways to reach them. The creative arts as a medium for social change have the potential to reach out to wider

audiences and the power to provoke, to shock, to challenge and to ultimately change norms, values and attitudes. The arts – theatre, film, music – can play a critical role in getting the message across that violence against women is always a violation of human rights; it is always a crime; and it is always unacceptable.

*Tiyatroglobal* has demonstrated the value of utilizing theatre to reach broad audiences. The commitment and dedication of *Tiyatroglobal* has shown the way for others. I hope this performance tonight has sown the seeds for initiatives such as this one in countries all around the world.

Thank you.