

Statement

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women – Statement from the Executive Director

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Occasion: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November 2008

This year's [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) marks a defining moment in the global drive to end violence against women. Fuelled by advocacy and action at the grassroots and national levels, the issue has moved to centre stage at the United Nations. In March 2008 the Secretary-General launched his global campaign, [UNiTE to End Violence against Women](#). Its duration through 2015, the deadline for meeting the MDGs, is a challenge for all of us, governments, civil society as well as the international community to take the actions needed to stop this prevalent human rights violation.

On 19 June 2008, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted [resolution 1820](#), which recognizes sexual violence in situations of armed conflict as a threat to national and international peace and security. The resolution calls for decisive actions by all involved in the conflict to protect women and girls. It calls on international security institutions to make sure that women participate in all aspects of conflict resolution and peacebuilding to ensure there is

redress for crimes. Resolution 1820, combined with [resolution 1325](#), form a powerful platform on which to build effective actions to end impunity for violence against women and ensure women's participation in all aspects of reconstructing institutions and communities.

This 25 November also marks the culmination of the first phase of UNIFEM's [Say NO to Violence against Women](#) campaign, which is part of the Secretary-General's *UNiTE to End Violence against Women* initiative. The overwhelming outpouring of support shows us that there is an ever-growing movement of people who urgently seek solutions to ending violence against women.

Now, we must use this momentum to get governments to implement the laws and policies already in place. Despite the fact that more governments than ever have passed such laws, there is still a wide implementation gap. To protect women from violence, and respond to the needs of survivors, we urge the adoption of accountability frameworks, with minimal standards of protection and response. These provide a checklist against which to assess the degree to which a country is upholding the human rights of women. Among the measures which should be in place are:

Prompt police response, health and legal services, free of charge, for poor women and girls;

Shelters and safe options for women surviving or fleeing life-threatening situations;

National hotlines available 24-hours a day to report abuse and seek protection;

Basic front-line services for emergency and immediate care for women and girls who have suffered abuse and rape; and

Accountable judiciary and national action plans to end discrimination and promote equality.

The Secretary-General's system-wide *UNiTE* campaign offers a blueprint for implementation and combined action. Partnerships between the United Nations and governments, civil society, the private sector, men and youth, and the religious community show great promise. Between now and 2015 we must all work together to make implementation our top priority.