

## Ban launches new Network of Men Leaders to combat violence against women



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launches a Network of Men Leaders

24 November 2009 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today marked the 10th anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women by launching a Network of Men Leaders, a major new initiative bringing together current and former politicians, activists, religious and community figures to combat the global pandemic.

“These men will add their voices to the growing global chorus for action,” he **said**, noting that 70 per cent of women experience in their lifetime some form of physical or sexual violence from men, the majority from husbands, intimate partners or someone they know.

“As I launch this Network, I call on men and boys everywhere to join us. Break the silence. When you witness violence against women and girls, do not sit back. Act. Advocate. Unite to change the practices and attitudes that incite, perpetrate and condone this violence. Violence against women and girls will not be eradicated until all of us – men and boys – refuse to tolerate it.”

Each member of the Network, part of the “UNiTE to End Violence against Women” campaign that Mr. Ban launched last year, will work to support the longstanding efforts of women and civil society organizations worldwide to end violence, undertaking actions from raising public awareness to advocating for adequate laws.

“We must demand accountability for the violations, and take concrete steps to end impunity,” Mr. Ban said in a separate message marking the Day. “We must listen to and support the survivors.”

He cited positive actions that men are already taking, such as judges whose decisions have paved the way for fighting abuse in the workplace, networks of men who counsel male perpetrators of violence, and national leaders who have publicly committed to leading the movement of men to break the silence.

He announced new grants for projects on the ground to be awarded this year by the UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, managed by the UN Development Fund for Women (**UNIFEM**), amounting to \$10.5 million for 13 initiatives in 18 countries and territories.

Resources for the Fund, which gives grants to support innovative regional, local and national initiatives, fall drastically short for meeting a vast demand, with grant requests totalling \$857 million received just for 2009. To address this gap, the target of raising an annual \$100 million for the Fund by 2015 has been set by the Secretary-General as an objective of his UNiTE campaign.

By 2015, the UNiTE campaign aims to achieve the following five goals worldwide: adopt and enforce national laws to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls; adopt and implement multi-sectoral national action plans; strengthen data collection on the prevalence of violence against women and girls; increase public awareness and social mobilization; and address sexual violence in conflict.

Members of the new Network include: Juan Carlos Areán, Programme Director of the Family Violence Prevention Fund; Gary Barker, International Centre for Research on Women; Ted Bunch, Co-founder of the National Association of Men and Women Committed to Ending Violence against Women; Brazilian novelist and UN Messenger of Peace Paulo Coelho; and Italian Foreign Minister Franco Fattini.

Others are: former Colombian President and Secretary General of the Organization of American States Cesar Gaviria Trujillo; former Chilean president Ricardo Lagos; Andrew Levack, Co-chair of MenEngageAlliance; Todd Minerson, Executive Director of the White Ribbon Campaign; Emmanuel Ochora of Gulu Youth for Action in Uganda; Dean Peacock, founder of Building Partnerships to End Men's Violence; Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero; Norwegian Justice and Police Minister Knut Storberget; and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa.

"My commitment to this issue stems not just from my position as UN Secretary-General, but also as a son, husband, father and grandfather," Mr. Ban later told a **news conference**. "Men have a crucial role to play in ending such violence – as fathers, friends, decision makers, and community and opinion leaders."

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