



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

**Statement by Ines Alberdi, Executive Director, UNIFEM
54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
1 March 2010**

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates, colleagues and friends:

I am honoured to have the opportunity to address this 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and to present to you the Note by 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/13/71- E/CN.6/2010/8).

I am pleased to present this year's report in the context of the 15-year review of progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the 2000 special session of the General Assembly. It is a pivotal moment to share experiences and good practices as we move towards the 2015 target for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This Commission has recognized violence against women as an abuse of women's rights that threatens to impede progress towards other development goals. Ending it is thus a priority for the entire UN system, as reflected in the Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign, which gives high-level support to regional and global partnerships to turn words into action.

The report before you responds 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. It 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 move forward all of the goals of the UNiTE campaign, including strengthening institutional capacity to implement national laws and action plans to end violence against women; mobilizing men, youth, religious and community leaders; advocating for needed budget allocations; and setting up data collection systems and indicators to monitor and track implementation.

Since its inception, the UN Trust Fund has been a key global mechanism for supporting model strategies to end violence against women and girls. It is unique in a number of ways. First, it is the only global grant-making mechanism to unite so many UN agencies at global and sub-regional levels to review strategies for addressing violence against women. In 2009 it included over 19 members of the inter-agency programme appraisal committees,¹ with five UN Resident

¹ In 2009, members included the Division for the Advancement of Women; Economic Commission for Africa; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; International Labour Organization; the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; UN Convention to Combat Desertification; UN Development Programme; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Human Settlements Programme; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; the UN 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; UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, along with leading civil society experts.

Coordinators participating in some of the sub-regional appraisal processes. Second, it recognizes that ending violence against women requires capacity development support, involvement of multiple partners and critical investment in knowledge sharing and evaluation, providing a solid evidence base for determining what works. Third, while resources are not all that it is needed, they are essential for expanding effective strategies.

The UN Trust Fund is now a recognized source of support for seriously under-resourced efforts. And while its resource base has been growing steadily, so too have the demands. In response to its 14th Call for Proposals, launched during in March, the UN Trust Fund received 1,643 concept notes with grant requests totalling US\$ 857 million, an increase of 53 percent in the number of applications and 63 percent in the amount of funding requested in just one year.

The UN Trust Fund's growth over the past four years has been guided by its 2005-2008 strategy, which introduced measures to enhance its effectiveness in line with strengthened monitoring and evaluation and effective institutional mechanisms at all levels to ensure coordination, action and accountability. The report summarizes progress in implementing the 2005–2008 strategy, under which the Fund continued operating in 2009, and covers its five pillars: impact, involvement, efficiency, knowledge management and capacity development, and resource mobilization. During 2009, the strategy underwent an external evaluation, highlights of which are also presented here.

In 2009, the UN Trust Fund managed a portfolio of 81 active grants across 76 countries and territories worldwide with a total value of nearly US\$ 30 million. The accomplishments of UN Trust Fund grantees during 2009 make a compelling case for how much can be done with strategic support. Highlights of the achievements of UN Trust Fund's grantees include:

- Breakthrough, a grantee in India, initiated a national television campaign in partnership with the Government, that reached over 124 million people in just four months, resulting in increased awareness on women's legal rights and concrete actions that can be taken to end violence against women and girls;
- In war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo, a grantee equipped 300 civil society leaders with new knowledge and a model for paralegal services that have allowed thousands of women survivors of sexual violence, including many with HIV, to finally access justice;
- Initiatives in Bolivia and Ecuador partnered with indigenous peoples' organizations to develop service models specific to their needs.

In 2009 the UN Trust Fund made grants to 13 initiatives in 18 countries and territories. Grantees will work to strengthen:

- the implementation of laws and policies through better coordination of services to protect women and girls from violence in Thailand;
- the piloting of a model to work through sexual and reproductive health services to analyse the impacts of violence against women and girls and increase support for survivors in Cameroon, Lesotho, Namibia and Nigeria;
- the scaling up of a proven approach for ending female genital mutilation in Gambia, Guinea, Mali and Senegal, moving from a health to a human rights-based approach.

In addition, several new grantees will work with girls and youth and reach out to particularly excluded groups of women and girls. These initiatives include:

- enhancing justice for sexually abused girls in Zambia through improved laws and enforcement;

- mobilizing youth groups to stop domestic violence in Cambodia;
- strengthening networks against sexual and intra-family violence to prevent violence against girls and adolescents in the municipality of El Alto, Bolivia;
- protecting the rights of Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and
- supporting indigenous women's groups in Guatemala and Mexico.

The comprehensive independent external evaluation assessed the UN Trust Fund's performance across its 2005-2008 Strategy's five pillars identifying strengths, weaknesses, challenges and current trends. Overall, the external evaluation concluded that the UN Trust Fund has been :

- a **relevant** mechanism to promote the enforcement of laws and implementation of policies to end violence against women and girls;
- **effective** in responding to the needs of women affected by or survivors of violence, increasing the capacity of duty bearers, and raising awareness among citizens of the gravity of violence against women and girls; and
- **efficient**, operating with lean management and very low overhead costs.

The evaluation also found that while initiatives supported by the UN Trust Fund have contributed to knowledge of how to end violence against women and girls, the management and dissemination of knowledge has been less successful. The UN Trust Fund Strategy 2010-2015 builds on findings and recommendations of this evaluation, working to improve knowledge management and strengthen its monitoring and evaluation systems

UNIFEM is currently driving a major fundraising effort for the UN Trust Fund to reach US\$100 million annually by 2015, a target adopted by the Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign. In an effort to engage business, philanthropic and government leaders to reach this target, UNIFEM brokered a partnership with the Clinton Global Initiative, which featured the fundraising drive as a Commitment to Action in its 5th Annual Meeting in September 2009.

I would like to thank Member States who contributed in 2009, including continued strong support from the Governments of Spain, the Netherlands, the United States of America, and Norway – the largest donors -- as well as critical support from the Governments of Austria, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Korea, and Trinidad and Tobago. The Governments of Kazakhstan and Switzerland contributed for the first time. Additional support came from the Avon Foundation for Women, Johnson & Johnson, and Zonta International; from UNIFEM National Committees in Austria, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom; and from many individuals. With contributions in the fourth quarter of 2009, the Trust Fund reached a total of US\$ 23.6 million in contributions and pledges, the largest amount mobilized for the Fund in a single year. The additional funds received in the end of the year will enable the UN Trust Fund to award additional grants in the first half of 2010.

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

Beyond managing the UN Trust Fund, UNIFEM has a leading mandate within the UN system on ending violence against women, for which it continues to foster partnerships and inter-agency collaboration. In line with its corporate strategy 2008-2013, "A Life Free of Violence" focuses on policy and legal reform; strengthening capacity to increase access to services and justice; and expanding data collection; tracking systems; and advocacy and awareness-raising.

Global and regional partnerships enable the Fund to continue to expand the reach of anti-violence efforts, including to draw attention to strategic but neglected groups, working with men and

young people. In Brazil, UNIFEM and other UN partners sponsored the first Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality, organized by Promundo, Instituto Papai, the MenEngage Alliance, UNFPA, Save the Children and the White Ribbon Campaign. UNIFEM joined the Advisory Committee of the international MenEngage Alliance working with men and boys to prevent gender violence; and joined UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO in a Clinton Global Initiative effort to mobilize resources for country surveys conducted by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention on sexual violence against girls.

UNIFEM continues to play an active role in inter-agency initiatives, including as Secretariat for UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict; and as a member of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality Task Force; Inter-Agency Task Force on Adolescent Girls and Inter-Agency Working Group and High Level Steering Committee of the Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign. The Fund is also partnering with the UN Human Settlements Programme to expand its Global Programme on Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls.

On behalf of UN Action and in partnership with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, UNIFEM, UNDP, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs organized a colloquium on "Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Peace Negotiations: Implementing Security Council Resolution 1820" for mediators, experts and women's rights advocates to ensure that conflict-related sexual violence is addressed in mediation processes. Many of the recommendations emerging from the colloquium were reflected in Security Council resolution 1888 (2009), in which the Council mandates peacekeeping missions to protect women and girls from sexual violence in armed conflict.

At the country level, UNIFEM also serves as a lead or partner agency in UN country team programmes dedicated to addressing violence against women in the framework of the MDG Achievement Fund in Bangladesh, Colombia and Morocco; and in the Asia-Pacific joint regional programme entitled "Partners for Prevention: Working with Boys and Men to Prevent Gender-based Violence", together with UNDP, UNFPA and UN Volunteers.

UNIFEM is an active contributor to the Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign. In March 2009, the Fund together with OSAGI and the Centre for Women's Global Leadership, convened the first global consultation with civil society on the campaign, and spear-headed coordination of the three UN regional campaigns in collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions in Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean and with the UN Regional Directors' Teams. UNIFEM also launched a second phase of the Say NO — UNiTE initiative to promote social mobilization through the interactive and social media website www.saynotoviolence.org. To date, a total of 175,000 actions have been registered and showcased, far surpassing our goal of 100,000.

Moving forward, UNIFEM will redouble its efforts to bridge the implementation and accountability gap by supporting intensified country-level action, as called for by the Secretary-General's campaign, focusing on aligning informal and formal justice systems with international human rights standards; developing targeted prevention approaches with key groups, such as men and adolescents, in order to stop the violence from occurring; and provision of innovative learning and knowledge-sharing opportunities and products through its forthcoming online global virtual knowledge centre on ending violence against women and girls (www.endvawnow.org), aimed at developing the capacity of country-level practitioners to implement policies and programmes.