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Letter from the Director

Welcome to the first issue of *Words to Action: an electronic newsletter on violence against women*.

The launch, in October 2006, of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women has accelerated the global momentum for action to prevent, and effectively respond to, this pervasive violation of women's human rights.

As a follow up to this study, in December 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations provided critical leadership when it adopted a comprehensive and action oriented resolution (A/RES/61/143). This resolution called on States, United Nations entities and other stakeholders to increase their efforts to address violence against women.

Since then, many actors at different levels have stepped up their work, and new stakeholders are increasingly joining this common endeavour for the first time.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is leading this effort with his Global Campaign to end violence against women, launched in February 2008. The Campaign will continue until 2015 to coincide with the target date of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Words to Action is intended to serve as a vehicle for more effective information-sharing on new initiatives and good practices in preventing and addressing violence against women.

It will complement other channels of communication and information dissemination by highlighting the work of the United Nations: in its intergovernmental and expert bodies, as well as in the entities of the United Nations system. It will also report on initiatives taken by groups of States at regional or sub-regional level, and on events and publications.

It is our hope that this newsletter will make a useful contribution to accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

We encourage feedback and suggestions.

Carolyn Hannan
Director
Division for the Advancement of Women



Words to Action: An electronic newsletter on violence against women

About *Words to Action*

Words to Action is a quarterly newsletter produced by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW).

The newsletter will disseminate information about work to address violence against women by:

- Intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and its Functional Commissions, the Human Rights Council and its subsidiary machinery
- Expert bodies, including the human rights treaty bodies
- Groups of States at the regional or sub-regional level
- Entities of the United Nations system

Future issues of *Words to Action* will contain the following main sections:

- News & Highlights: This section will highlight developments from the United Nations system, including the Division for the Advancement of Women.

- Feature Item: Each newsletter will contain a succinct discussion of a particular topic or issue.
- Database Update: This section will provide quarterly updates on trends and developments from the coordinated database on violence against women. The database is being established by the Division for the Advancement of Women in accordance with a request from the General Assembly (A/RES/61/143). It will be launched in March 2009.
- Feature Resources: This section will present new and useful tools and resources for addressing violence against women.
- Upcoming Events: This section will preview meetings, conferences, seminars and similar events, primarily at sub-regional, regional or global level.

As of January 2009, *Words to Action* will be disseminated as an electronic newsletter only. Interested individuals/organizations are invited to subscribe online, or from the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women. Back issues will be archived on the same site.

The newsletter will be published in English.

About DAW

The Division for the Advancement of Women in Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat supports the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations on gender equality and the empowerment of women. For more information, see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/>



News & Highlights

- **25 February 2008:** The Secretary-General of the United Nations launches his global campaign to end violence against women and girls. <http://endviolence.un.org/>
- **March 2008:** Ten entities of the United Nations issue an interagency statement calling for the elimination of female genital mutilation (OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO). www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/52sess.htm#statements
- **26-28 May 2008:** The Division for the Advancement of Women holds an expert group meeting on good practices in legislation on violence against women, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, Austria. www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw_legislation_2008/vaw_legislation_2008
- **3 June 2008:** The United Nations General Assembly holds a thematic debate on human trafficking. www.un.org/ga/president/62/ThematicDebates/humantrafficking
- **19 June 2008:** The United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1820 (2008) on women, peace and security, which focuses on sexual violence in armed conflict. www.un.org/Docs/sc/unscl_resolutions08
- **8 July 2008:** The United Nations Economic and Social Council holds a dialogue with the chairpersons of the functional commissions on the role of the Economic and Social Council in addressing violence against women in all its forms and manifestations. www.un.org/ecosoc/docs/pdfs/08CSPanel_III.pdf

Feature Item

Indicators to measure violence against women

Indicators summarize complex data into a form that is meaningful for policy makers and the public. They are part of the knowledge base that supports informed policy- and decision-making and enable an evidence-based comparison of trends over time. They have a critical role in monitoring progress towards achieving specific goals and commitments, and in awareness raising and advocacy.

There are two main types of indicators on violence against women: indicators that measure the extent of the phenomenon (for example prevalence rates); and indicators that measure States' responses to this violation of women's rights (for example existence of laws, policies, and of services for survivors). At the national level, States may collect data for a number of indicators to monitor the scope and prevalence, as well as responses to violence against women.

Currently, there are no global indicators on violence against women. This gap has recently become more pronounced as achievement of the eight Millennium Development Goals is tracked by a global monitoring framework of 57 indicators.

In response, efforts have intensified to develop global indicators on violence against women and promote their use. Two prominent examples are: the work of the United Nations Statistical Commission, in consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women; and the work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

The Statistical Commission is considering a set of international indicators for measuring prevalence rates of: physical violence; sexual violence; intimate partner violence; and certain harmful practices (female genital mutilation and early marriage). A working group will submit its advice to the Statistical Commission in March 2009. For comparison between countries, the Special Rapporteur has proposed three indicators for measuring violence against women, namely grave violence against women, femicide, and social tolerance; as well as indicators for State responses.

International indicators provide an incentive for States to collect data on violence against women and monitor the extent of such violence, and trends over time. Availability of such data contributes to increased awareness, and enhances the capacity of States to evaluate legislative and policy reforms and take action to address and eliminate violence against women.



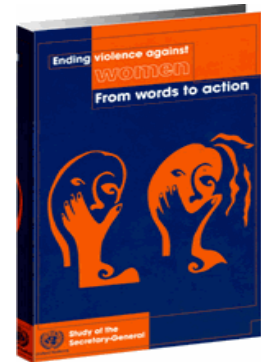
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Feature Resources

- **Ending violence against women: From words to action. Study of the Secretary-General**

On 22 December 2003, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare an in-depth study on all forms and manifestations of violence against women. The study, launched in 2006, calls for efforts to eradicate violence against women to become a higher priority at the local, national and international level. It identifies ways to close the gap between States' obligations under international norms, standards and policies and their inadequate and inconsistent implementation at the national level.

The study is available for download online at:
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/index.htm>



- **Other resources**

- Report of the expert group meeting on indicators to measure violence against women
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw_indicators_2007/egm_vaw_indicators_2007
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, "Indicators on violence against women and State response" (A/HRC/7/6)
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rapporteur/annual.htm>
- Report of the expert group meeting on good practices in legislation on violence against women.
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw_legislation_2008/vaw_legislation_2008

Upcoming Events

- **13-15 October 2008:** The Third Committee of the General Assembly will take up the question of the advancement of women, and will consider three reports of the Secretary-General on violence against women:
 - Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women. Report of the Secretary-General. A/63/214, 4 August 2008
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/documents/ga63.htm>
 - Trafficking in women and girls. Report of the Secretary-General. A/63/215, 4 August 2008
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/documents/ga63.htm>
 - Eliminating rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations, including in conflict and related situations. Report of the Secretary-General. A/63/216, 4 August 2008
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/documents/ga63.htm>
- **25 November 2008:** International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
- **25 November – 10 December 2008:** 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

For more information or to subscribe

Email: daw@un.org

Subject: "e-newsletter"