



Freedom from violence for every woman and girl A priority for the Post-2015 Agenda

INVITATION

Wednesday, 25 September 2013, 1.15-2.45 pm

West Terrace Dining Room, Conference Building, 4th floor

Violence against women and girls remains one of the most grievous and pervasive human rights violations and has been an impediment to both peace and development and will continue to be a barrier in achieving sustainable development.

The Governments of Finland and Liberia, together with UN Women, are organizing a High Level Ministerial Luncheon on violence against women and girls and the post-2015 agenda, on the occasion of the General Assembly Special Event on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The event will focus on freedom from violence and how critical it is to the realization of human rights and the achievement of sustainable development now and beyond 2015. Speakers will include H.E. Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finland, H.E. Ms. Julia Duncan Cassell, Minister of Gender and Development, Liberia, H.E. Ms. Heidi Hautala, Minister for International Development, Finland, and Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngucka, the newly appointed Executive Director of UN Women. The discussion will be moderated by Mr. Todd Minerson, Executive Director of White Ribbon Campaign Canada and Member of the Secretary-General's Network of Male Leaders to End Violence Against Women.

Building on the success of the 57th Session of the Commission of the Status of Women agreed conclusions, where Member States strengthened their commitment to preventing and ending violence against women and girls, this discussion will identify and discuss why it is imperative to continue the momentum for ending violence against women and girls by including it as a central issue in the post-2015 development agenda with dedicated indicators and targets.

A concept note is attached.

Please RSVP by 15 September to rsvp.yke@formin.fi

For more information, please contact Ms. Marjo Pekkanen at the Permanent Mission of Finland: marjo.pekkanen@formin.fi, tel. 212.821.0261, or Ms. Gail Fargalo at the Permanent Mission of Liberia: zakwahf@yahoo.com, tel. 212.687.1033.

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CONCEPT NOTE

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have undoubtedly improved health outcomes, raised education levels, and secured better livelihoods for millions of women and men around the world. However, they failed to fully address gender inequalities and gender-based discrimination.

Efforts underway to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs, including gender-related commitments are critical to ensure the still unmet promise of the MDGs is fulfilled. Looking ahead beyond 2015, there is an opportunity to build on lessons learned from the MDGs to more fundamentally address and promote gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment.

A transformative approach is required to deliver real change in the lives of women and girls. At a minimum, every woman and girl must be able to live free from violence. Violence against women and girls remains one of the most grievous and pervasive human rights violations. It is a universal problem, occurring in all countries and at all levels of development, and a major impediment to achieving human rights, peace and security and sustainable development. And while one in three women worldwide experience physical and/or sexual violence, mainly at the hands of an intimate partner, it was not included in the MDG framework.

At this year's 57th Commission on the Status of Women, Member States strengthened their commitment to preventing and ending violence against women and girls. Already, discussions underway on the post-2015 development agenda have emphasized the importance of ending violence against women. The High-level Panel report includes a standalone goal on gender equality with dedicated targets on preventing and ending all forms of violence against women and girls, including ending child marriage.

There is no doubt that, to be effective, the new development framework must include freedom from all forms of violence, including in situations of conflict and other humanitarian settings. Targets must address prevention and response, such as protection and prosecution, including the need to change perceptions, attitudes and behaviors that condone and justify violence against women, while ensuring security, support services and justice for survivors.

The Ministerial level event will focus on freedom from violence and how critical it is to the realization of human rights and the achievement of sustainable development now and beyond 2015. Speakers will share specific country experiences in preventing and responding to violence against women; highlight the importance of access to justice as well as freedom from violence in conflict-affected settings; emphasize the importance of engaging men and boys; and discuss how best to build on existing commitments to fully embed ending violence against women in the post-2015 agenda.