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Say NO: Onward to Advocacy and Action!

On 25 November 2008, UNIFEM submitted more than 5 million signatures to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Thanking everyone who had raised their voices to Say NO, the Secretary-General said: "Social mobilization is the spark that ignites action. I am delighted that governments, civil society organizations and the private sector have come together through the Say NO initiative." This marked the culmination of the first phase of UNIFEM's [Say NO to Violence against Women](#) campaign. UNIFEM will continue to expand the network and advocate for action in the context of the Secretary-General's [multi-year campaign](#) on ending violence against women and girls.



5,066,549 people said NO to violence against women and girls and urged governments everywhere to take action, channel resources, and implement policies that prevent and address this global pandemic. Governments answered the call to action in many ways — representatives at the ministerial or higher level from 67 governments, including 30 heads of state, as well as some 600 parliamentarians signed on to the campaign and expressed their commitment. Some

have already translated this commitment to action — for instance, in Tanzania, a multisectoral national committee was launched to review the national action plan on violence against women, and police officers were trained to provide victims support. As the Government of Australia signed on to the campaign, its representatives announced Australia’s accession to the UN’s CEDAW Optional Protocol.

The *Say NO* network continues to expand as more governments sign on, and initiatives at the national level continue. Since 25 November, the Under Secretary of State for Italy and several ministers from the United Kingdom have signed on to the campaign. In December, UNIFEM received more than 3,500 signatures from Fiji, where 25 university students were trained and recruited as volunteers to engage people on the streets, in universities, theatres and opera, and in government ministries, by collecting signatures and disseminating information on the issue. The Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children in Tanzania launched a national public awareness-raising initiative in collaboration with the company Vodacom, so that their subscribers could send messages to the *Say NO* campaign via SMS, free of charge. And in the European Parliament, Swedish MP and Vice Chair of the Women’s Rights Committee, Eva-Britt Svensson, is leading efforts to garner the support of all members of the European Parliament for a written declaration that calls for a “European Year on Zero Tolerance of Violence against Women,” with a view to enhance services and resources for survivors.

As the *Say NO* campaign proceeds to catalyse global action towards ending violence against women and girls, the [Say NO website](#) will feature regular updates.

Gender Equality Makes Strides at Climate Change Talks

Language endorsing the need for gender parity in climate change decision-making processes and adequate responses to the gender dimensions of global warming was successfully introduced at the [United Nations Climate Change Conference](#) in Poznań, Poland, on 1–12 December. The language — included under the “Shared vision on long-term cooperative action on climate change” — was tabled by the Government of Iceland and is a solid step in ensuring that the agreement under design to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012, will be gender-sensitive. This “Shared vision” is an overarching component of the ensuing climate talks and is meant to guide the overall global effort to address climate change. [Read the complete story.](#)

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UNIFEM around the World

Significant Increase in the Number of Government Donors in 2008

In resource mobilization, 2008 was a record-breaking year for UNIFEM. The number of governments contributing to UNIFEM’s core resources rose from 49 in 2007 to 80 in 2008, an increase of 63 percent. The amount of funding to core resources also rose from just under US\$44 million in 2007 to US\$51 million in 2008, an increase of 16 percent. [Read the complete story.](#)

Spain to Contribute 50 Million Euro to New Gender Equality Fund

The Government of Spain has committed 50 million Euro (about US\$67 million) to the new UNIFEM-administered Gender Equality Fund. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 15 December by Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo, Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, and UNIFEM Executive Director Inés Alberdi. The Gender Equality Fund builds on the agreed conclusions of the 52nd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women on Financing for Gender Equality to accelerate progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment. The Fund will support governments and civil society organizations in developing countries to fast-track national actions in support of the economic and political empowerment of women. It will also undertake regular reviews of gender equality policies, plans and strategies.

worldwide, and will support countries to strengthen these. Proposals for funding will be assessed by an independent committee of thematic experts. UNIFEM will be the Fund's Secretariat. [Read the complete story.](#)

Avon Makes Largest Single-Year Corporate Contribution to UN Trust Fund

Avon Products Inc. contributed US\$1 million to the UNIFEM-managed UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women in December 2008, the largest single-year contribution from the business community to the Trust Fund. [Read the complete story.](#)

Progress Report Launched around the World

UNIFEM's flagship publication, *Progress of the World's Women 2008/2009: Who Answers to Women? Gender and Accountability*, originally launched at UN Headquarters in New York in September 2008, is being released in a number of countries around the world. A French version was launched in Rabat, Morocco, in December 2008, and Spanish and Portuguese versions will be presented in early February in the context of conferences in Madrid and Lisbon. The report was launched in the past few months in Argentina, Viet-Nam, Ethiopia, Turkey and Timor-Leste, soon to be followed by launches in Brazil, Chile, Liberia, Mexico and the Philippines. The executive summary of the report has already been translated into several languages, including Arabic, Thai, Japanese, Tetum, Serbian and Norwegian. Further translations and launches are scheduled throughout 2009. For more information, please contact Ms. Raluca Eddon, raluca.eddon[at]unifem.org, +1 212 906-6896.

AFRICA

Gender Observatory Established in Rwanda

Three officials were sworn in on 27 January as administrators of the new Gender Observatory in Rwanda. UNIFEM has been a strong advocate for the establishment of the Gender Observatory and has already initiated discussions on collaboration in the context of its new governance programme. The newly appointed Chief Gender Monitor, Oda Gasinzigwa, explained that the Observatory will work hand in hand with other government institutions to ensure that gender is mainstreamed at all levels and gender-disaggregated data is collected to inform policy processes. "We will cut across all sectors of the economy, identify gender performance and give reports that reflect the gaps in the development system, which will be a basis for decision making," she said. [Read the complete story.](#)

Nigerian Police Strengthens Resolve to End Violence against Women

UNIFEM organized a training workshop for one hundred Nigerian police officers on police response to violence against women and human trafficking, at the UN House in Abuja on 11–12 December, in collaboration with UNICEF, ActionAid and the Nigerian Police Force. The broad goal of the training was to promote awareness among police officers of gender-based violence and human trafficking. The participants were introduced to existing legislation, and gaps in the law enforcement system were identified. [Read the complete story.](#)



AMERICAS & THE CARIBBEAN

'Safe Cities' Going Global

UNIFEM convened an internal planning workshop to craft its new Global Programme on Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 9-11 December. More than 30 representatives from UNIFEM field offices and headquarters were joined by select international experts to share strategies and lessons learned from existing Safe Cities programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean and work on a common framework to move the programme forward globally. The Safe Cities programme is the first global effort focused on developing a model of how practical measures by local authorities, coupled with women's empowerment and community mobilization, can result in preventing violence against women. The model is intended to be widely

disseminated to policy makers, donors, and civil society organizations worldwide for adaptation and upscaling, in line with UNIFEM's catalytic role in generating community-level initiatives for advancing gender equality. [Read the complete story.](#)

Radio Programmes Tackle Discrimination against Indigenous Women

In Latin America, indigenous women are frequently discriminated against for being women, for being indigenous, and in many cases, for being poor. However, their voices are growing louder, demanding recognition of their rights. Organizations that fight discrimination against indigenous women are gaining strength, supported by UNIFEM. As part of a UNIFEM regional project, two organizations have produced a series of radio programmes designed to highlight common problems encountered by indigenous women and provide innovative solutions in an entertaining manner. [Read the complete story.](#)

EUROPE

National Committee Established in Hungary

The Hungarian National Committee Association (NCA) for UNIFEM was launched on 28 January in Budapest, becoming the 17th National Committee for UNIFEM. The Hungarian NCA will generate financial and political support for UNIFEM and its programmes through advocacy and fundraising initiatives and cooperation with other national partners (government, civil society and the private sector) to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. [Read the complete story.](#)



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Recent Resources

[Bridging the Gap: Financing Gender Equality.](#) This booklet is intended for those who wish to better understand the links between gender equality, public policy formation and development financing. It highlights the importance of expanding policy choices in setting the framework for national development plans, and emphasizes the central role of strategies to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women in achieving development effectiveness. [Read more.](#)



[Platform for Action: Towards the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting \(FGM/C\).](#) The Donors Working Group on FGM/C (DWG) has since 2001 brought together key governmental and intergovernmental organizations and foundations committed to supporting the abandonment of FGM/C. The group has reached a consensus on a common programmatic approach to support the abandonment of the practice and make a major difference for girls and women worldwide. This Platform for Action summarizes its elements. [Read more.](#)



[Making Democracy Work for Women: Initial Experiences from 10 UNDEF Funded Projects.](#) This document presents UNIFEM-executed projects funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) from its first round of grants disbursed in 2006. A common factor among the projects that are being implemented across the globe is the creation of an enabling environment that provides an opportunity for women to participate in reform policies, agendas and decentralization processes. [Read more.](#)



To learn about newly published resources, subscribe to the [UNIFEM Recent Publications and Tools web feed.](#)

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Upcoming Events

53rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will convene for its [53rd session](#) at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 2–13 March to consider the priority theme, “The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS.” The Commission’s work will be guided by two reports of the UN Secretary-General on the theme. One will identify and discuss key issues in sharing of responsibilities between women and men and suggest policy recommendations; and a second will provide an overview of mainstreaming efforts related to sharing of responsibilities at the national level. The review theme to be discussed by the Commission is, “Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels.” As an emerging issue, participants will also debate “Gender perspectives of the financial crisis.” A special web corner, providing information on the CSW and UNIFEM side events, will be available shortly on the UNIFEM website. [Visit the CSW website.](#)

International Women’s Day

This year’s International Women’s Day theme is “Women and Men: United to End Violence against Women.” The United Nations will focus on the UN Secretary-General’s multi-year campaign, [UNiTE to End Violence against Women](#). There will be a number of activities, most notably, a high-level panel discussion on Friday 5 March on this year’s theme. For more information, visit the [IWD web site](#) closer to the date.

Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality

The Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality will take place in Rio de Janeiro, 30 March – 3 April 2009. Four hundred fifty participants from around the world will share their work in applied research, policy, and program development. Their work challenges rigid gender norms and engages men and boys in reducing violence against women and girls, promoting sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, and fatherhood and care giving. For more information, [visit the website.](#)

Call for Applications: Voices of Our Future

World Pulse, a global media organization covering world issues through the eyes of women, calls for applications for Voices of Our Future, a new international women’s correspondent network. Applications are due by 14 March, through the organization’s social networking site, [PulseWire](#). [Read the complete story.](#)

Job Vacancies

- [Regional Programme Director \(re-advertised\)](#)
Location: Bangkok, Thailand
Post Level: D-1 (ICS-13)
Application Deadline: 13 February 2009
- [Regional Programme Director \(re-advertised\)](#)
Location: Dakar, Senegal
Post Level: D-1 (ICS-13)
Application Deadline: 13 February 2009
- [Country Programme Manager](#)
Location: Khartoum, Sudan
Post Level: L-5
Application Deadline: 17 February 2009
- [External Relations Analyst – UN Partnerships](#)
Location: New York, United States of America
Post Level: L-2

Application Deadline: 18 February 2009

- [Partnerships Analyst](#)
Location: New York, United States of America
Post Level: L-2
Application Deadline: 18 February 2009
- [Programme Specialist: Africa Section](#)
Location: New York, United States of America
Post Level: L-3 (ICS-10)
Application Deadline: 23 February 2009

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About UNIFEM Currents

UNIFEM Currents is the electronic news bulletin of the [United Nations Development Fund for Women](#) (UNIFEM). It provides up-to-date information briefs on UNIFEM initiatives, successes, events, projects and activities worldwide. It is published several times per year and delivered by e-mail. [Click here to subscribe to UNIFEM Currents](#).

UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. Placing the advancement of women's human rights at the centre of all of its efforts, UNIFEM focuses its activities on reducing feminized poverty; ending violence against women; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls; and achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war. For more information, visit www.unifem.org.

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