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News Release

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Catherine Deneuve, Hillary Swank, Sir Bob Geldof Sign UNIFEM *Say No to Violence against Women* Campaign

**Hundreds add their names at Cinema for Peace gala
Over US\$100,000 raised for UN Trust Fund**

United Nations, Berlin/New York — Internationally acclaimed artists, social activists, and politicians, including Catherine Deneuve, Hillary Swank, Christopher Lee, Sir Bob Geldof and German Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, have added their names to the UNIFEM-led *Say NO to Violence against Women* campaign (www.saynotoviolence.org). Hundreds followed suit at last night's Cinema for Peace annual gala event in Berlin, Germany. "Can you imagine that up to one in three women will be a victim of violence?" said Ms. Deneuve, encouraging others to sign the campaign. [Cinema for Peace](http://www.cinemaforpeace.org) is an initiative that aims to promote peace and international understanding through the medium of film. The gala, held to coincide with the International Film Festival in Berlin, raised more than US\$100,000 for the UNIFEM-managed [UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/0802/0802011.untrustfund.html).

Violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive human rights violations in the world. It occurs in the home, at places of work, in schools, on public streets, in refugee camps. UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman, who is the spokesperson of the Say NO campaign and who also acted as Honorary Chair for this year's Cinema for Peace event, emphasized the urgency of the issue in a video message: "Glittering evenings are generally not the place to dwell on hard truths. But we cannot be together without our conscience being deeply troubled by the situation in Darfur, in Eastern Congo and in so many under-reported conflicts where women's bodies have become part of the battlefield, where rape is being used intentionally as a weapon of war. This is why I have lent my passionate support to the United Nations' efforts aimed at ending violence against women." Reacting to an impassioned speech on the situation in Darfur by Luis Moreno-Ocampo, Chief Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court (ICC), Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, German Minister for Economic Development and Cooperation said: "The rape of women in conflict must no longer be neglected. These crimes have to be brought before the ICC because they are war crimes."

Every year, Cinema for Peace highlights the philanthropic efforts of an internationally acclaimed film star to help raise awareness and funding. "UNIFEM has been a leading advocate in bringing global attention to the issue of violence against women, and we are happy to lend our support," said Jaka Bizilij, founder of Cinema for Peace. Acting UNIFEM Executive Director Joanne Sandler added: "We deeply appreciate Cinema for Peace uses its high profile to alert a wide audience to the devastating effects that violence against women has on individuals, families and communities, and we are grateful for the generous financial support." Accepting an award for his film *Juno*, which has also been nominated for the 2008 Academy Award for best picture, director Jason Reitman said: "I cannot think of a more important issue than the topic [Cinema for Peace chose] this year. I learned all about tolerance from my mother, all about love from my wife and all about hope from my daughter."

Through the Say NO campaign people sign their names to a virtual book as an expression of public support and a call on decision-makers worldwide to make ending violence against women a top priority. The UN Foundation is donating US\$1 for each of the first 100,000 signatures. The campaign calls for

support to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, which awards grants to innovative initiatives by governments and non-governmental organizations in the developing world. Since 2005, the Trust Fund has in particular focused on supporting the implementation of laws on violence against women, for example, through training of police and the judiciary. Another focus is on addressing the link between violence against women and HIV/AIDS. Since its inception in 1996, the UN Trust Fund has awarded a total of US\$18 million to 250 groups in 120 countries.

The *Say No to Violence against Women* campaign will run until 25 November 2008.

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. UNIFEM, 304 East 45th Street, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10017. Tel: +1 212-906-6400. Fax: +1 212-906-6705.