

News Release

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Senegalese President, Cabinet Ministers Sign UNIFEM's *Say NO to Violence against Women Campaign*

United Nations, New York — The Government of Senegal, led by President Abdoulaye Wade, has signed on to UNIFEM's Internet campaign, Say NO to Violence against Women (www.sayNOtoviolence.org). Today, during a ceremony in New York, Mrs. Awa Ndiaye, Minister of the Family, Women's Entrepreneurship and Microfinance, formally handed over the signatures to UNIFEM.

Besides President Wade, Prime Minister Cheikh Hadjibou Soumare and 23 Government Ministers have added their names to the Say NO campaign — a global advocacy effort that invites 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 initiative is designed to feed into and support UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's [campaign on the same issue](#).

"I'm very honoured to officially hand over the signatures of the Senegalese government to UNIFEM," the minister said. "For the President as well as the Cabinet, it is an official way to say no to violence against women and to show our commitment to UNIFEM's important campaign," she added in her speech. The Minister expressed her dedication to partner with UNIFEM to create a society that is committed to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

"Ending violence against women requires commitment at the highest decision-making level, and we deeply appreciate this public expression of political will," said Antonie de Jong, UNIFEM's Advisor on Outreach and Business Development. "By adding their names to the Say NO campaign, the Government of Senegal sets an example and reaffirms its dedication to put an end to this gross violation of women's human rights."

UNIFEM is currently conducting a major study on violence against women in Senegal, in collaboration with UNFPA, to support the Government in designing policies and programmes to fight gender-based violence and help the police, judiciary and health centres better address the matter.

Violence against women is probably the most pervasive human rights violation, affecting as many as one in three women and girls. Since resources are urgently needed, the Say NO campaign calls for support to the [UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women](#). This UNIFEM-managed Trust Fund awards grants to innovative local initiatives in the developing world. Since its inception in 1997, it has awarded more than US\$19 million in grants to 263 projects in 115 countries. UN Trust Fund grantees have worked to stop human trafficking, put

an end to honour killings and provide services for survivors. A particular focus lies on supporting the implementation of laws and policies on violence against women. Strategies include advocating for and building awareness of new legislation; working with criminal and civil justice systems to develop procedures for investigation and restraining orders; training judiciaries, law enforcement and health workers; and advocating for adequate budgetary allocations.

The Say No to Violence against Women campaign will run until 25 November 2008. The UN Foundation will donate US\$1 for each of the first 100,000 signatures to the UN Trust Fund.



Mrs. Awa Ndiaye, Senegalese Minister of the Family, Women's Entrepreneurship and Microfinance, presents signatures to Mr. Antonie de Jong, UNIFEM's Advisor on Outreach and Business Development.
(Photo: UNIFEM/Malcolm Linton.)

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.