

United Voices Say NO to Violence against Women

Speeches delivered at the [high-level event](#) on advocacy and action to end violence against women, held at UN Headquarters on 25 November 2008, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, featuring the presentation of all signatures to UNIFEM's Say NO to Violence against Women campaign to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

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Introduction: Daljit Dhaliwal

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, UNIFEM Executive Director Inés Alberdi, UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman, distinguished speakers and guests.

Good afternoon and welcome. My name is Daljit Dhaliwal and it is my distinct pleasure to moderate this event.

We are commemorating the International Day to End Violence against Women. What brings us together today is that each of us is engaged on the issue — we care about the right of every woman to a life free from violence. And whether through our work or in other ways, we want to make a difference.

Today, we will hear from speakers who will talk about promising ways to end violence against women. And we will get the news on the extent of the worldwide network of committed people that has been created through UNIFEM's Say NO to Violence against Women campaign.

Our first speaker is the host of this event. Please welcome UNIFEM Executive Director Inés Alberdi.

Inés Alberdi

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, dear friends and colleagues,

This year's International Day to End Violence against Women has special significance. It marks a defining moment in the global drive to end violence against women and girls. Mr. Secretary-General, in February you launched your global campaign, UNite to End Violence against Women. Its duration through 2015, the deadline for meeting the MDGs, is a challenge for all of us to redouble our efforts to stop this most universal of human rights violations that affects millions of women and girls on a daily basis.

The atrocious crimes behind the statistics have made headlines in recent weeks: In Somalia, a girl was stoned to death, after being raped. She had turned to the authorities for help; instead she was brutally murdered for alleged adultery.

In Afghanistan, a group of young girls were attacked with acid, their faces disfigured. They had provoked the Taliban by going to school.

And every day in South Kivu province, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, an average of 40 women are reported to be raped.

These are cases that have made headlines. Yet the vast majority of the crimes committed against women are still largely hidden from public view. Public awareness and social mobilization are therefore critical.

This is why last year, UNIFEM launched an awareness and advocacy initiative, Say NO to Violence against Women, in support of your campaign Mr. Secretary-General. Through the Say NO initiative, we invited concerned citizens to sign their names to a call to make ending violence against women a priority for Governments around the world. Our aim was to show that there is an ever-growing movement of people demanding action.

The response has been overwhelming. Through Say NO people in the farthest corners of the world have become engaged. More than 200 civil society organizations representing millions of members have joined the effort. Private sector partners have come on board. It is a large, new constituency with great potential for further expansion and mobilization. Mr. Secretary-General, we will continue to engage this constituency around the issue of violence against women in the years to come, and work closely with you.

Equally important, the Say No campaign has served as an effective platform for decision-makers to publicly express their commitment to end violence against women. No less than 29 Heads of State or Government and 188 ministers representing 60 governments have added their names. Over 600 Parliamentarians from more than 70 countries have joined the effort. This high-level support is crucial, and I want to especially thank these signatories today. They have often been instrumental in devising national plans and enacting legislation to protect women, demonstrating that strong political will translates into decisive action.

Many of them have also increased funding of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women that UNIFEM manages on behalf of the UN system. I am happy to report that just yesterday, we could announce new grants in 2008 to 23 organizations amounting to some 19 million dollars. This is more than the total disbursed through the Trust Fund since its inception.

We will soon hear first hand from one of the grantees. The path-breaking work supported through the UN Trust Fund over that past 12 years has made a major contribution to what we know today: Violence against women is a crime that can be prevented. United, we can end it.

Thank you!

Daljit Dhaliwal: Introducing Ban Ki-moon

Thank you so much, Inés. It is indeed encouraging to hear how people around the world are coming together on this issue. This is exactly what our distinguished next speaker is calling for, through his campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women.

It is my honour and pleasure to introduce United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Mr. Secretary-General, the floor is yours.

Ban Ki-moon

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

When I launched my global campaign to end violence against women in February, I stressed that we must act.

We must act because every day, countless women are beaten and abused in their homes, where they should feel safe.

We must act because girls risk sexual abuse and rape in schools when they should be able to learn.

We must act because women and girls are trafficked across borders.

We must act because widespread and systematic sexual violence in conflict has become a horrific weapon of war.

In launching my campaign, I called on government leaders, advocates and people throughout society to carry this urgent message around the world

UNIFEM led the charge. Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman took action. So did every other person who signed their name to the “Say NO to Violence against Women” effort. This sent a resounding call around the world.

I want to thank you for raising your voices.

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. Looking around this room, I am particularly happy to see so many men participating.

We need to mobilize for laws that protect women and punish perpetrators. And we need to enforce the laws that are already on the books, and put an end to the impunity that so often prevails.

We need national plans that spell out how to raise public awareness and change attitudes, how to provide services for survivors, and — most importantly — how to prevent the abuse of women.

This will take resources. I urge greater support for the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. If we meet the target of raising \$100 million annually by 2015, we can make a significant difference in women’s lives.

There is also a need for reliable data. We know that violence against women and girls is pervasive and widespread. But we also know that fear and shame prevent many women from speaking out. More data and analysis will strengthen our responses, and help us track progress.

We need to mobilize against the systematic sexual violence committed against civilians in conflict. The recent flare-up of fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is only the most recent example of the appalling nature of the problem.

In all conflict areas, we not only have to stop the fighting, but also make sure that sexual violence does not continue after the guns fall silent. We should also do more to engage women in peacebuilding.

And finally, as we look ahead, we need to work with youth. They hold the key to a violence-free future.

Our goal is ambitious: Instead of having to say no to violence against women, we want to be able to say: there is no violence against women.

Thank you.

Daljit Dhaliwal: Introducing Marie Nyombo Zaina

Thank you Mr. Secretary-General, for this clear guidance on the way forward.

You mention the brutal sexual violence that has been reported from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mass rape of women and girls is a horrible part of the warfare going on there — and a reminder of why we are here today.

Marie Nyombo Zaina knows first-hand the situation. She is the coordinator of the national network of non-governmental organizations in the DRC. Supported through a grant from the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, her organization provides urgently needed services to survivors and tirelessly promotes prevention and protection. Mme Zaina, the floor is yours.

Marie Nyombo Zaina

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, abuses are committed against women and children as a way to ensure the daily survival and upkeep of the combatants and troops, and provide them with sexual services. The atrocities perpetrated by these armed groups are of an unimaginable brutality and go far beyond the fact of rape. Rape and sexual slavery are at the root of these atrocities which lead to the complete physical and psychological destruction of women with all the consequences that this entails for society as a whole: the propagation of HIV/AIDS, the birth of children as a result of rape, an increase in the number of orphans and vulnerable children due to the deaths of women who have HIV/AIDS. The absence of political will and the lack of knowledge among Congolese women of their rights make the situation even worse.

I am myself a victim of violence. During the second year of my graduate studies, my father forced me into a polygamous marriage. I was beaten up virtually every day. After my first pregnancy, I decided to flee my marriage. Thanks to the support of a Catholic missionary who was concerned with promoting women's studies in the province of Maniema I could complete my second year of education in South Kivu.

In 2000, after obtaining my degree in development science and technologies, I undertook to defend the rights of women and girls. Women's organizations taking on the fight against violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS are not very popular. They do not receive the same funds as those led by men. I created the association, "Action for the Promotion and Defense of the Child and the Woman". Through this organization, I had regular contact with many orphans and widows from the 1998 war and other women and girls who were victims of sexual violence in the town of Kindu. In 2002, I spearheaded the creation of the National Network of NGOs for Women's Development (RENADEF), which was designed to unite the efforts of men and women activists to empower women and to take care of female victims.

Thanks to a grant through the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, we can provide a range of services to survivors, such as legal, psychological and socio-economic support. One of them is Madame Nadine from Goma, in the Province of North Kivu. She was gang-raped by armed individuals in front of her husband and her four children — two boys and two girls. They also gang-raped her two daughters aged 14 and 16 years. These armed men, after taking everything that they could find in the house, shot dead the father and the two boys and took the two daughters with them to the mountains. Nadine, depressed, desperate and inconsolable was welcomed, in January 2008, in our RENADEF shelter where she is now receiving support and care and undergoing psychological rehabilitation.

In order to help women survivors such as Madame Nadine, we must confront challenges at various levels:

- In the judicial sector, the number of trained legal personnel is still insignificant and must be increased. Furthermore, impunity after acts of violence is still widespread, especially due to corruption — a factor that has to be eliminated urgently.
- Medical treatment and care of victims of sexual violence and HIV/AIDS are urgent necessities, given the magnitude of the current crisis facing victims.
- Finally, it is important to set up other refuges and shelters in order to cope with the immense needs associated with providing psychosocial care to the victims of violence. Funds are also needed to allow them to regain their place within the society and become economy.

Most importantly, however, is to end the war so as to put an end to the atrocities committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially against women and children. I therefore urgently appeal to the international community to help support the Congolese people in their peace negotiations.

Daljit Dhaliwal: Introducing Nicole Kidman

Thank you so much, Marie, for coming so far to be us, and thank you for the work you are doing for women like Nadine. This is why we have to mobilize. Successfully mobilization needs of course passionate advocates, people who raise their voices and encourage others to follow their example. UNIFEM is fortunate to have the support of such an inspiring personality who has made it her call to motivate others to speak out against violence against women. It is now my pleasure to welcome the spokesperson of the Say NO campaign, UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman.

Nicole Kidman

Good afternoon. Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, participants, ladies and gentlemen,

I am once again honoured to be at the United Nations. So much happens within these walls and corridors — and as I am coming to understand more and more, what happens here can really make a difference.

Listening to Marie talk about the situation in the DRC and tell Nadine's story, vividly reminds me why I became UNIFEM's Goodwill Ambassador in 2006. I signed on to amplify the voices of the women and girls who have been subjected to violence and abuse. I still find the statistic shocking and almost unimaginable. Here it is again: One in three women and girls may suffer from abuse and violence in her lifetime. Today, we come together to see what we can do to change this.

Marie is both brave and effective. She shows what an impact a single person with determination and commitment can make. But, ending violence against women is everybody's business. That's why last 25 November UNIFEM launched the *Say NO to Violence against Women* campaign. We thought that the more names we collected, the stronger our case to make ending violence against women a top priority for governments everywhere. We knew this chorus would help support the Secretary-General's efforts at the highest levels. I am so proud to serve as the campaign's spokesperson.

We reached people in every corner of the world. A survivor of violence heard about it on Mexican TV and called my friends at UNIFEM to learn where she could sign her name. There was a young man from Edinburgh, Scotland who posted the Say NO campaign on his Facebook page along with a poem described as a "message for every man the world over" that imagined an end to violence against women and girls.

I was moved by the photographs of people campaigning in Tanzania, wearing tee shirts emblazoned with the say NO message, in Swahili. So many places are not internet wired, so Say NO moved from the computer to be passed sign-up card, by sign-up card, person-to-person. A young Thai princess joined me as a Goodwill Ambassador to mobilize her country — and mobilize they did.

Now, I want to designate each one who signed on as a powerful goodwill ambassador, active in his or her community. I am delighted to have this vast global team working with me and UNIFEM. Together, we can do so much. We can support practical, hands-on solutions like the programmes Marie runs and work to have many, many more.

Daljit Dhaliwal: Introducing Inés Alberdi

Nicole, you say that a global team of new Goodwill Ambassadors has come together through the Say NO campaign. We will now learn how vast a network this really is as we come to the presentation of the signatures. Mr. Secretary-General and Ms. Alberdi, may I invite you to join us on the floor.

Inés Alberdi

Mr. Secretary-General you have strongly affirmed that ending violence against women and girls must be a top priority for us all. This is why one year ago, we sent a call around the world and asked people to take a stand. The results are in. We have tallied the numbers from Thailand to Tanzania, from Ecuador to Fiji, from Austria to Jordan.

Nicole Kidman

A year ago, our goal was to gather one million names representing one million strong voices saying NO to violence. I am so delighted to announce that we have far, far, far surpassed our goal. As of today's 6:00 am Eastern Standard Time deadline **5,066,549** people from all over the globe answered the Say NO campaign's call and entrusted us with their names.

Mr. Secretary-General, it is my great honor to entrust to you the signatures — and more than just signatures — the hopes and expectations of the millions of people who signed the Say **NO** campaign. We've reproduced some of them and gathered in this book. They're from people everywhere.

[Kidman hands the book to Secretary-General.]

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

I would like to thank every single person who signed this call to action. I especially want to thank UNIFEM for mobilizing such enormous support. It is my pleasure to welcome each and every one of you to my global campaign team. I pledge to do all I can to end this scourge. And I will continue to count on all of you to join me until we stop violence against women everywhere. Thank you.

Daljit Dhaliwal: Introducing video #1

What an incredible turnout indeed! I know that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has to leave us because urgent business calls on him. Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for having been with us to hear how strongly people responded to UNIFEM's call. And here now is a visual impression of what this really meant around the world.

[Video: Say NO campaign efforts worldwide]

Daljit Dhaliwal: Introducing Ambassador Augustine Mahiga

Wow! Talk about a message that truly went around the world! Our next speaker brings a message from President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania, a political leader who was one of the first heads of state to add his signature to the Say NO campaign, and who has committed to make ending violence against women a priority on his watch. It is my pleasure to introduce Ambassador Augustine Mahiga, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations.

Ambassador Augustine Mahiga

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the onset, I wish to present to you greetings from H.E. Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, the President of the United Republic of Tanzania who is unable to be with us at very important occasion.

We commend UNIFEM for this campaign which has become an important advocacy tool for ending violence against women. To date, we have collected 380,000 signatures and our target is to get 1,000,000 signatures. So in our country, the efforts continue. Furthermore, our Say NO efforts have also taken aboard another critical human rights issue, the campaign to end violence against the Albinos, a group of citizens who face so much discrimination and violence, and need our help.

When the President of Tanzania signed UNIFEM's "Say No to Violence against Women" campaign on Saturday, 24th May 2008, he launched a nationwide initiative and sent a signal to the public that violence against women and children is a priority of the government — not only a women's affair. The President asserted that the government will undertake all means of action, including the review of laws, to end these violations against women and girls.

The government has embarked on this campaign from our conviction that achieving gender equality and women's empowerment are pivotal, not only to our fight against inequality, but also to our nation's development. It is precisely for this reason that ending violence against women is included in our National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) so as to ensure that we provide resources — though still inadequate — in the national budget, and monitor the results.

Our government understands that signing to the UNIFEM Say NO campaign is not an end in itself — but a tool in the toolbox to build support for the goals we share. The government has in place a National Plan and strategy to end violence against women and children. We are working with our development partners, the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance, and civil society organizations to develop an integrated national response to preventing violence against women by implementing the National Plan. Violence against women is dehumanizing and should not be tolerated. Let us combine our efforts to end impunity on this scourge amongst our communities.

Daljit Dhaliwal: Introducing Andrew Hughes

Thank you so much, Mr. Ambassador. We have already heard today about the urgent need for increased protection of women. Our next speaker works to provide security in conflict zones where the United Nations has established a presence. Please welcome Andrew Hughes, Police Advisor and Director of the Police Division in the United Nations Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

Andrew Hughes

Women and children are increasingly targeted in conflicts, with sexual violence a common tactic of war.

Shamefully, rape and other war crimes are often perpetrated by men in uniform, so that women cannot draw a distinction between uniformed protectors and aggressors.

In countries racked by war, those in society who are least able to protect themselves fear turning to uniformed forces as much as they fear armed militias and rebels, given their experience at the hands of both.

This presents a unique opportunity for UN Police to redefine the role of policing in countries recovering from conflict.

UN Police have a vital role to perform in promoting law and order, creating trust in uniformed police and in establishing faith in an impartial justice system.

UN Police Officers have been serving in peace operations since the 1960s and today UN Police is the fastest-growing component of peacekeeping, with nearly 12,000 professional police officers in 18 peacekeeping missions, out of a total mandated strength of 17,200 police.

UN Police Officers conduct conflict resolution, rape crisis counseling, humanitarian aid and logistics, and are sensitive to the needs of the local populations.

UN Police rebuild, reform and restructure national police forces as well as training and mentoring national police officers to establish professional local police forces who will be a permanent source of protection for women and children.

In Sierra Leone, UN Police instigated the first policy on sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment for the national police force. In UNMIT, the police component assisted in establishing a Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) in police districts in 2007, staffed by women police officers.

UN police have also had resounding success in Liberia, with the first-ever all female formed police unit. These police officers from India have achieved international recognition for bringing safety to streets of Monrovia and building trust with Liberians.

As a result of their work, many young Liberian women now want to become police officers, and these women understand the needs of victims of sexual violence.

We are increasing the number of female UN Police Officers, and aim to have a 40 percent female UN Police contingent in Darfur, where it is crucial that rape survivors can seek the assistance of female police officers. A positive step in this direction, we have just received a pledge for up to 100 female Nigerian officers to be deployed to Darfur in a formed police unit.

Furthermore, UN Police in Darfur (UNAMID) undertakes firewood patrols in order to protect women on their forays outside refugee camps, for example in Kalma — a camp housing 90,000 refugees, twice a week a column of UN police cars, pickups and armored personnel carriers (APCs) escort women some 6 miles into the surrounding hills to collect firewood. UNAMID hopes to spread the firewood patrols to the dozens of camps around Darfur, but began with Kalma where incidents of rape and violence have been particularly prevalent.

UNAMID troops began a night patrol initiative, cordon and search operations, and foot patrols to further protect civilians. It was reported that in the weeks after the hybrid force commenced regular night patrols around the camp perimeter, there was not a single live fire incident and civilians reported less stress and sleep disturbance.

In post-conflict countries, UN Police help to restore law and order, nurture new confidence in the uniformed forces and ensure that national police forces will treat women and girls with the respect and dignity they deserve for generations to come.

Daljit Dhaliwal: Introducing video #2

Encouraging new efforts by security forces are also under way in Rwanda to make women's lives safer and offer more support to survivors. It is estimated that up to half a million women were raped during the 1994 genocide. This traumatic legacy and its aftermath that has spurred police and army into a major effort. Partnering with UNIFEM they have embarked on new approaches to put an end to sexual and gender-based violence, as the film we are going to see now shows.

[Video: UNIFEM in Rwanda]

Daljit Dhaliwal: Introducing Msgr. Hector Fabio Henao

For many people around the world, their respective religious communities are places where they seek consolation and moral guidance. Religious leaders know about the devastating effect that violence has on the victims, and also on their families. This is why Religions for Peace, the world's largest multi-religious coalition embraced the Say NO campaign and is partnering with UNIFEM to engage communities of faith around the world on the issue.

Msgr. Hector Fabio Henao works as the Coordinator of the Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Team of Caritas in Latin America. In Colombia, where he also serves National Director of Social Pastoral in Colombia, he encounters daily the needs of women survivors of conflict and violence.

Msgr. Hector Fabio Henao

I applaud this initiative by UNIFEM which holds particular importance in the sense that it coincides with the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

I have seen violence close up in contexts faced by women in situations of armed conflict. In Colombia, from the vantage point of the Conference of Catholic Bishops and its social organizations we consider that part of our mission is to raise awareness concerning human rights as well as to mainstream human rights, strengthen networks for preventing violence against women, offering protection to the victims of violence as well as spiritual support. In this task we support the nuns and sisters who work with their local communities, helping them to rebuild their lives when confronted with the traumas of violence and abandonment — efforts quietly performed by numerous women in religious communities around the world.

Recently, with many social organizations, I have been intensively involved in preparing official government policy to address the difficult living conditions facing approximately two million women displaced by violence, many of these also victims of sexual violence.

In the fact-finding inquiries delving into the past that are currently in progress in Colombia and in other countries, relatively little information has thus far surfaced concerning the atrocities experienced by women. As a result, we have taken on the commitment of campaigning for the

truth to come out, in an effort to secure justice, and above all, full compensation for victims, particularly women. We insist upon the need to overcome the social discrimination and marginalization which the conflict inflicts upon the female population.

In the story of this personal and institutional commitment to eliminating violence against women, one of the developments that has affected us most strongly has been the murder of sister Yolanda Cerón, the Director of social and pastoral care in Tumaco, in the south of Colombia. She defended in organizations of women and religious leaders the right of Afro-Colombian communities to stay in their places of origin despite pressures brought to bear upon these communities by the paramilitary and guerrillas. Yolanda was murdered as a woman, in her role as a woman of faith, and in her capacity as a defender of human rights. Her death has led me to issue a public call demanding that due regard be shown for the dignity of women in this region of Colombia, and in addition, I have called for an end to atrocities against communities, and I am recommitting myself to efforts to achieve a life of dignity for women and other societal groups. Since her murder we have stepped up our support for women's networks and movements that have a strong commitment to justice and peace.

I have learned some major lessons, as a man of faith, regarding the suffering of the women with whom we work and this has led me to reaffirm my commitment to ensuring that violent practices are not allowed to spread in our society and to ensure that guarantees and justice are available for women. I consider that this sensitivity for the suffering of women should become a hallmark of faith-based communities. We are called upon to take a stand in our efforts to assist those who suffer, and to pool our resources to ensure that the elimination of violence against women is uppermost in the agenda of the world's communities. Specifically, the World Conference of Religions for Peace on September 25, 2008 issued a petition (signed by world religious leaders) concerning the moral obligation to put an end to violence against women, and they committed themselves to work together to overcome this crisis.

It is time to eliminate all kinds of violence against women. The campaign, "Say No to Violence against Women" should unite us all in broad-based efforts to put an end to violence against women.

Daljit Dhaliwal: Introducing Andrea Jung

In the United States alone, it is estimated that domestic violence victims lose nearly 8 million days of paid work per year — the equivalent of 32,000 jobs. Reason enough for the private sector to get involved. For Andrea Jung, CEO of Avon, however, the motivation is her company's mission to empower women economically which can be all important to escape violent relationships. Under her leadership, Avon has given USD 1 million to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women in 2008, the largest-ever contribution made by a company in one year. Please welcome Andrea Jung.

Andrea Jung

Thank you, Daljit. Mr. Secretary-General, Executive Director Inés Alberdi, Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman, participants and honored guests.

It is an incredible privilege to be here today with so many distinguished leaders who are committed to ending violence against women in their countries and communities. Thank you for including me.

As a leader in the private sector, I feel strongly that Avon in particular — and the private sector in general — has a responsibility to make its voice heard and take actions to help end violence against women.

I want to commend Inés Alberdi, *and* UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman, on the success of the *Say NO to Violence Against Women* Campaign, which has gathered critical support from global leaders everywhere. I am proud that Avon was a launch partner and continues to be involved.

Avon shares UNIFEM's mission to help improve the lives of women and girls globally. We are proud to partner with them to ensure that women lead empowered, safe and secure lives. With almost 6 million independent Avon Sales Representatives, serving 300 million women in over 100 countries, Avon is by far the largest women's company in the world. Our mission is to be *the* company for women, and we have a long proud history of advocating on behalf of issues that are important to women.

Avon Representatives collectively earn more than six billion dollars a year. And in every country where we do business, we see first hand the powerful impact these earnings have, not only on a woman's life, but also on the lives of her family, her community and ultimately society at large.

Given Avon's focus on providing economic opportunities for women, it is only natural that we should feel equally passionate about ending violence against women. The truth is, lack of financial resources and lack of personal safety are two reinforcing, co-dependent crises. Without adequate economic resources, women can become imprisoned in a vicious downward cycle from which there is often no escape.

To address the issue of violence against women, four years ago the Avon Foundation launched our Speak Out against Domestic Violence initiative. The Avon Foundation is the world's largest corporate foundation for women. To date, it has raised and awarded more than \$660 million to causes that benefit women. Until recently, the Foundation's main focus was the fight against breast cancer. But as violence against women has escalated around the world, we have marshaled our resources to address this critical epidemic which affects more than one billion women each year.

We are still only at the very beginning of this crucial effort but we know we can't go it alone. The problems are simply too great. The solutions too complex. That's why I strongly believe that the answer lies in forging strong partnerships between the public and private sectors. If we fuse our strengths — the vast resources and commitment from the private sector, combined with the public sector's regional expertise and grassroots networks, then working together, our voices will be that much louder ... our impact that much greater ... our solutions that much closer.

Avon has formed many different public/private partnerships. But we are the most proud of our partnership with UNIFEM, which we announced very shortly after the Secretary General launched the *Say NO to Violence against Women* campaign a year ago today.

In fact, in this very Chamber, in honor of International Women's Day this past March, Avon very proudly pledged a \$1 million commitment to support the important work of the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women. This is the largest corporate grant ever awarded to the Trust Fund in one year.

The money we've committed has been specifically earmarked to help institutionalize the protection of women's legal rights and enforce laws where they exist. The truth is that when a woman is attacked without consequence to the perpetrator, the law is failing to protect her. We want to help change this.

We are also forging grassroots partnerships with local UNIFEM organizations around the world, and mobilizing our Avon Representatives in fundraising efforts to support them. At the global level, we're proud that our partnership and financial support to the UN Trust Fund will continue again in 2009.

In addition to UNIFEM, this year we also collaborated with the U.S. State Department, bringing 70 women judges from around the world to Washington D.C. for a first-ever global conference on women's justice. We will also be announcing some exciting new partnerships in 2009 to advance global justice for women.

So, again, on behalf of Avon and the Avon Foundation, I want to thank the UN and UNIFEM for the opportunity to share our voices. It has been a great honor to be here today and reaffirm our commitment to this important cause.

I truly believe the collective efforts of everyone in this room represent a global tapestry of safety and support for women around the world. Together, if we leverage our combined resources, efforts and ideas, then we will make the world a safer place for women for generations to come.

Individually, we can make a significant difference, but together, we can change the course of history.

Thank you.

Daljit Dhaliwal: Introducing Nicole Kidman

Thank you, Ms. Jung. It is now pleasure to invite once again UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman — she has a special message of how to make a future without violence against women a reality.

Nicole Kidman

I am so inspired and energized by what I've heard and seen today. The challenges are enormous and the situations so serious. Yet, I am not discouraged — in fact, the outpouring of support and the determination to continue to Say NO gives me hope. Just yesterday I learned that Australian Government leaders sent a note to Ines and to me that they were adding their names to the Say NO campaign on behalf of the Government of Australia.

The letter outlined programmatic steps that they were taking and commended UNIFEM "on its effort to raise the awareness of the importance of us all saying NO to violence against women. I want to thank all the Government representatives for taking this campaign so seriously, for signing, and for delivering more services and justice for women.

Wow, what a lot has happened over the past year. You all know that not too long ago we had a baby. And I think about the world that she and her older brother and sister will find and how they

will be treated. And it's a small leap from one's own children to think about and care about other mothers, like Nadine, and other children.

In a way, the Say NO campaign is as much about the future as the present. To make a future without violence against women and girls a reality, we have to engage the next generation — in particular boys and young men. It's our generation's responsibility to try and mend what is broken, but it is young people who will refashion the world and make it new. Take a look at what went on in Bangkok for Say NO.

[Video: Say NO campaign efforts in Bangkok]

Daljit Dhaliwal: Introducing video #4

You care, you think, you take action — what could better sum up the spirit of the Say NO campaign? Through this remarkable campaign political and corporate leaders, activists and celebrities, students and people of faith, young and old, women and men have come together to demand that violence against women be stopped.

We have come to the end of our programme. Thank you everybody for joining us. I know we will all continue to be involved. And before we leave, we will close with some brief but inspiring images from around the world.

[Video: Say NO campaign efforts worldwide]

Daljit Dhaliwal

Thank you, and good-bye!