



Check against Delivery

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Moving from Promises to Progress
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Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues and Friends,

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairperson, and other members of the bureau on your election to this committee. I thank you for this opportunity to present the Note by the Secretary-General on the Activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). I want to thank, in particular, UNIFEM Consultative Committee members – representatives of Estonia, Chile, Korea, Norway and Sudan – for their guidance and support throughout the year.

Guided by its strategic plan, 2008-2013 (DP/2007/45), UNIFEM works with governments, civil

society and UN partners to strengthen women's economic security and rights; end violence against women, reduce the prevalence of HIV and AIDS among women and girls and advance gender justice in democratic

I. Strengthening women's economic security and rights

Reaching 71 countries in 2008, UNIFEM continued to respond to requests to strengthen the capacity of planning, finance and other sectoral ministries to integrate gender equality into poverty reduction

Reaching 56 countries in 2008, UNIFEM's support to end violence against women prioritized implementation of laws and policies, strengthening formal and informal justice systems as well as the security sector to respond to women's rights, and involving key actors, including men and boys and faith-based leaders. Prevention is a key focus, including as part of an initiative with UNICEF and UNFPA targeting adolescents. At the policy level, UNIFEM supported partners to secure end- violence provisions in national development and poverty reduction strategies in 5 countries; to draft and adopt laws and policies in 15 countries to address multiple forms of violence including domestic violence and female genital mutilation; and to secure justice system reforms in 4 countries.

These promising numbers are overshadowed by numbers that add up to a pandemic of staggering

proportions and a response that is still much too weak . An estimated 150 million girls under 18 suffered some form of sexual violence in 2002 alone. From 100 to 140 million girls and women have experienced female genital mutilation and live with its repercussions. Over 60 million girls worldwide are child brides and 80 per cent of the 800,000 people who are trafficked annually are women and girls.

Violence against women is a worldwide pandemic, only recently emerging from the shadows. There is

IV. Halting the spread of HIV and AIDS among women and girls

UNIFEM works with UNAIDS and other UN partners, national AIDS councils and civil society organizations, particularly networks of HIV positive women, to secure gender-responsive policies, strategies and plans to address the pandemic. In 2008, UNIFEM contributed to the integration of gender equality and women's rights into National Strategic Plans and/or Frameworks on HIV/AIDS in 19 countries. Of the 19 countries supported in 2008, UNIFEM provided a National AIDS Council, which...