

**FROM THE UNITED NATIONS
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR
THE ELIMINATION OF
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
NOVEMBER 25, 2011**

The Charter of the United Nations affirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human individual and in the **equal rights of men and women**. In 1979 The General Assembly adopted the **Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDA)** . Although this convention sets forth the responsibility of all governments. it is yet to be observed with the necessary political commitment and resources.

The current Secretary General ,Ban Ki-Moon has been proactive on the condition of women and girls,by raising public awareness and initiated a campaign, **UNITE, to end violence against women**. He has also created a new UN body coordinating the UN's work on women called UNWOMEN

Despite much public awareness , violence against women and girls is a widespread violation of human rights and is seriously under- reported.Such violence takes many forms. Globally, 6 out of 10 women are likely to be sexually assaulted during their lifetimes. Female genital mutilation affects millions of girls worldwide and every year millions of women and girls suffer some form of violence. These outrages include domestic violence, rape, dowry-related killing, sexual violence during armed conflict and trafficking, a multibillion a year business. (For more information see book by Kristof and WuDunn: Half the Sky).

It must be kept in mind that women make up nearly two-thirds of the world's illiterates; women are two-thirds of the world's poor, they perform two-thirds of the world's work and produce 50 percent of the food, while at the same time, earning only 10 percent of the income and owning one percent of the property. Although the condition of women has improved, one of the roots of violence against women is on-going and persistent discrimination.

In keeping with the persistent violence against women around the world, the UN has instituted the UN TRUST FUND to provide funds to support innovative projects world-wide. Since it was initiated in 1997, this fund has delivered over \$78 million to 339 projects in 127 countries and applications

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are on the increase. In 2011, the fund received over 2500 applications requesting nearly \$1.2 billion for crucial programs in 123 countries. The increased demand shows a growing interest in ending the devastating violence against women and at the same time presents an important venue for action.

Currently, projects under UN Trust fund in Cambodia, Nepal and Uganda are helping women rebuild their lives following acid attacks. In India it provides up to date information on the Domestic Violence Act . This enables judges, victims and police officers, to actively enforce the new law against domestic violence. In Ethiopia the UN Trust Fund project is addressing such traditional practices as female genital mutilation and early enforced marriage. Many projects expand so as to include survivor access including legal assistance, psychological counseling and, very importantly, health care.

It must be noted, that some cross-cultural studies of wife abuse show that there are communities that are free of such violence. The existence of these small communities indicate that violence against women is not an inevitable result of male biology or male sexuality. These data indicate that views of masculinity are changing and some projects have now developed programs promoting healthy models of masculinity.

The oppression of women is immoral and totally unacceptable. The underutilization of womens' talents undermines societal progress. A poetic image expressing the basic point is: "A bird flies on two wings. A bird cannot fly if one wing is broken."

To learn more about the UN Trust Fund and to make a contribution,
www.lifefreeofviolence.org

Dr. Sylvain Ehrenfeld, the IHEU and National Ethical_Service representative to the UN and Dr. Reba Goodman, member of the Ethical Culture Society and Professor of Pathology