



UNITED NATIONS

The UN System in Tanzania Statement on the International Women's Day, 8 March
2007
Dar es Salaam

The Honourable Minister of Community Development, Gender Affairs and Children, Hon. Sophia Simba,

Honourable Deputy Minister, Members of Parliament, Permanent Secretary;

Regional Commissioner and District Commissioners;

Your Excellencies High Commissioners and Ambassadors, members of the Diplomatic Corps; Distinguished Representatives of International Organisations;

Partners in Government, Civil Society and the Media;

Distinguished invited guests;

Ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the UN system in Tanzania we feel privileged to be joining you in this commemoration of the International Women's Day whose international theme is "Ending impunity for violence against women," and the National theme is "Women and Environment – use Traditional Baskets to Preserve the Environment".

The international theme of this year's Women's Day, calls for stronger commitment and urgent action to eliminate violence against women. Violence against women is without doubt one of the most widespread violations of human rights and studies have shown that one in three women will suffer some form of violence in her lifetime. The widespread impunity that exists today not only encourages further abuses and suffering. It also sends the signal that male violence against women is acceptable or normal. It is not. Together, we can and must do more to prevent violence against women, provide services to survivors, and ensure that perpetrators are punished.

The UN in Tanzania is committed to working with the Government and other partners to combat discrimination and violence against women and girls. Today, we pay tribute to the women and men who are demanding justice and remedies for victims of violence. We commend Parliament, the Government and other stakeholders for taking action by establishing national legal frameworks to deal with the many different forms of violence against women and girls.

While progress has been made in the adoption of laws, much greater action is needed to enforce laws and raise awareness. Everyone should understand that violence against women and girls is unacceptable and will no longer be tolerated. We all have a responsibility to act when confronted with violence and everyone has a duty to support and ensure that violence against women and girls is unacceptable. As noted by the former UN Secretary-General, "violence against women has yet to receive the priority

and resources needed at all levels to tackle it with the seriousness and visibility necessary”.

In Tanzania, the United Nations system is working with the Government both in Mainland and Zanzibar to ensure a systematic mechanism for monitoring and responding to issues of violence against women and girls. We are strengthening partnerships with civil society to implement national action plans to prevent and address violence against women. We will continue to promote human rights, including the right to sexual and reproductive health, women's empowerment and gender equality.

Environmental conservation and preservation is key to the efforts to protect women and girls from violence. When women and girls walk long distances to fetch firewood and water, they are exposed to the threat of sexual violence. UN efforts to promote programmes to scale up the use of modern energy sources in rural areas will improve women's livelihoods and also protect them from acts of violence.

Together, we must change deeply rooted attitudes and practices that discriminate against women and girls. And together, we can support those who have a duty to respond to violence against women—whether they are police officers, judges, lawyers, immigration officials, medical personnel, or social workers—to provide a response that is compassionate and comprehensive. Together we must work to create an environment where women enjoy the right to be free of violence.

By ending impunity for violence against women, we will make greater progress in achieving peace, development and human rights for all.