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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Today and Every Day:

Tackling Violence against Women and Girls in Asia Pacific

United Nations, Bangkok, 25 November 2011 — Today we commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, which aims to direct the world's attention to the urgent priority of ending the pandemic of violence against women and girls. It also marks one year since the launch of Asia-Pacific UNiTE, the regional component of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's global campaign *UNiTE to End Violence against Women*.

Violence against women and girls continues to be one of the world's most widespread human rights violations, cutting across all boundaries of age, race, class, culture and geography. It includes rape, domestic violence, harassment and abuse at work, on the streets and in schools, sexual violence in conflict and harmful practices such as prenatal sex selection and "honour" killings. "Violence against women is not solely a women's issue," said Michelle Bachelet, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, "It diminishes each and every one of us. We need to come together to end it. By coming together, by standing up against violence, we will come closer to peace, justice and equality."

UN Women is working with partners in support of the UNiTE campaign to raise public awareness and increase political will and resources for preventing and responding to violence against women and girls. The campaign aims to act as a catalyst for existing efforts by supporting actions and sharing results within the region and beyond. Moni Pizani, Representative and Regional Programme Director, UN Women East and Southeast Asia, explains, "The UNiTE campaign offers a unique opportunity to mobilize and energize all of us – governments, civil society, young people, the private sector, the media, and the UN system – to step up our efforts to consign violence against women and girls to the history books once and for all."

One mechanism which is uniquely placed to contribute to the goals of UNiTE on the ground is the UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund). The UN Trust Fund supports innovative, effective initiatives that transform the ways in which people and institutions think and act. In Asia Pacific, the UN Trust has a portfolio of 25 grants in 28 countries for a total value of USD 20 million. Grantees are working on prevention by engaging youth, men and traditional leaders; supporting left behind girls in China; creating zero tolerance communities in schools in Papua, Indonesia;

supporting the rights of migrant workers; and ensuring that indigenous women have a voice in customary legal practices. It has provided seed funding for approaches that are recognized among the world's leading practices, such as the Bell Bajao (Ring the Bell) campaign in India.

The UN Trust Fund announced its new global [Call for Proposals](#) on 23 November to support country-level programmes to end violence against women and girls. Using multiple strategies, UN Trust Fund partners are working with youth, engaging men and boys, combining media with education, and developing the capacity of first responders. However, funding gaps continue to persist: the UN Trust Fund was able to meet only 5 percent of the demand for funding in 2011.

On this first International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women since the creation of UN Women, countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region have found creative ways to engage their communities in heralding change. In Pakistan, a million signatures will be collected with concrete commitments to take action. In Cambodia, over 8,000 people in 10 provinces across the country will gather to form human white ribbon shapes, an international symbol for ending violence against women. In Viet Nam, circle painting, a community-based art form which promotes inclusiveness, collaboration and imagination, will encourage dialogue and responsibility for ending violence against women.

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NOTE TO EDITOR

In 1999, the General Assembly designated 25 November as the *United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*, to direct the world's attention to the urgent priority of end the pandemic of violence against women and girls (VAW/G), which devastates lives, fractures communities and stalls development.

ABOUT UN WOMEN

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their rights worldwide. For more information, visit www.unwomen.org.