

Dear Honorable:

Chair, UN Commission on the Status of Women, Ambassador Gallardo-Hernandez  
Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, Rachel Mayanja  
Director, UN DAW, Carolyn Hannan  
Executive Director UNIFEM, Noeleen Heyzer  
Secretary General, KA  
GA President Jan Eliasson  
Executive Director, UNFPA, Thoraya Obaid

Greetings:

The NGO Committee on the Status of Women NY and the undersigned organizations, are writing to you about two matters of great concern. The first issue relates to the role of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. The second relates to the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women--the thematic issue of violence against women itself.

We are deeply troubled that the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women is not participating at the upcoming 2006 session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and that there exists no official mandate for her to annually report to and participate in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women sessions.

It is clear that the work of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women relates directly to the central issues before the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. While the Special Rapporteur's role is to report on the current global reality of violence against women to the Commission on Human Rights, the issues being considered by the Special Rapporteur are of utmost importance to the work of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The Special Rapporteur's expertise on the substantive thematic issues serves the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women with crucial leadership as it undertakes its work.

In addition, the participation of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women in the 2006 Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women will provide an important contribution to the Secretary General's study on violence against women as well as guidance to the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women which is currently conducting the study. Her participation and leadership would also be invaluable to, "*Violence against Women: From Critical Concerns to Collective Action*," the one day conference that the NGO Committee on the Status of Women is holding Saturday, 4 March at the New York County Lawyer's Association.

Further, the regular participation of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women before the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women ensures that there is a United Nations system-wide approach to the issues relating to violence against women, advancement of women and women's human rights and development. At a time of United Nations reform, the importance of institutionalizing the work of and the close collaboration between the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights and the United Nations Secretariat cannot be underscored.

We therefore urge that a mandate be issued requiring the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women to annually report to and participate in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women sessions.

At the same time, we also urge the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women to officially schedule Violence against Women as one of the thematic issues to be considered during the 51<sup>st</sup> Session in 2007. By taking up this issue immediately after the Secretary General's study on violence against women which will have been released during the 2006 General Assembly session, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and all member states will show their good will in truly reaffirming their commitment to the prevention and elimination of violence against women and to the promotion of human rights of women worldwide.

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