

# 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE

## November 25 - December 10, 2009



### Important Anniversaries (2009-2010)

In 1993, in Vienna, Austria NGO advocates at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights promoted the idea that “women’s rights are human rights” and that violence against women was a critical human rights concern worthy of state attention.<sup>1</sup> This UN World Conference immediately preceded other events of significance in the landscape of feminist organizing, either in terms of the UN system or in spheres of global women’s advocacy, and some of these events will be marked by landmark anniversaries in coming months. Each event or date noted below presents opportunities for women’s and human rights activism, either through participating in or creating events to celebrate the anniversary, or by developing relevant materials for use with your constituencies. Please keep these dates in mind as you plan for your 16 Days Campaign activities!

### 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development: September 2009

**Background:** The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, Egypt in 1994, resulted in a 20-Year *Programme of Action* (PoA). The ICPD PoA called the elimination of violence against women a cornerstone of population and development programs. The conference recognized links between women’s rights, sustainable development and population and resulted in four goals: 1. Universal education for all by 2015; 2. Reduction of infant and child mortality; 3. Reduction of maternal mortality; and 4. Access to reproductive and sexual health services including family planning in all countries by 2015. UNFPA is the lead UN agency promoting ICPD@15, and the focus is to strengthen monitoring, implementation and institutionalizing of reproductive health into processes such as MDG reports, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and other national development plans and budgets. Advocates and UN colleagues are promoting the opportunity afforded by ICPD@15 to draw attention to sexual and reproductive health and rights to ensure that these are included in policy arenas and negotiations between key donors and governments.

**Landmark Dates:** September 5-13, 1994

#### Key Related Documents and Links:

- Report of the International Conference on Population and Development: <http://www.un.org/popin/icpd/conference/offeng/poa.html>
- ICPD *Programme of Action* (PoA): <http://www.unfpa.org/public/site/global/publications/pid/1973>
- ICPD 5-Year Review website: <http://www.un.org/popin/icpd5.htm>
- ICPD at 10 (2004): <http://web.unfpa.org/icpd/10/index.htm>
- ICPD/15 Briefing Note and List of Upcoming Events: [http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/15/docs/briefing\\_note.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/15/docs/briefing_note.pdf)
- Websites for NGO participation in 15-year review process: <http://www.ngosforicpd15.org/> and <http://www.15andcounting.org/>

#### Suggestions for Advocacy:

- Continue to hold governments accountable for adhering to commitments made at the global level that ensure women can enjoy all rights, including sexual and reproductive rights
- An ICPD@15 publication will be created, which will include technical review information and also provide concrete examples of ‘lessons learned’ <http://ngosforicpd15.org/content/view/14/31/>

**2009 Events:** The *ICPD at 15 Global NGO Forum* will take place as a pre-registered event in Berlin, Germany on 2-4 September 2009; For schedule of all events, see UNFPA website: <http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/15/events.cfm>

### Beijing +15: October 2009 – September 2010

**Background:** The *Beijing Platform for Action* was adopted by governments at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in China and was created with significant influence by civil society organizations. Reviews of the commitments

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see *Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women’s Human Rights* (available in PDF <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/demand.html>) and the video “The Vienna Tribunal: Women’s Rights are Human Rights!” (<http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c172.shtml>).

made by the UN and governments have taken place during Beijing +5 (2000) and Beijing +10 (2005) and will take place again during Beijing +15 (2010). There will not be a separate General Assembly - Special Session convened by the United Nations; however, the theme for the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women will be "Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and the outcome of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly." In preparation for this review, the UN regional commissions are working with the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) to distribute and collect questionnaires from governments about their laws, policies and practices related to gender. The regional commissions, as well as women's organizations, coalitions, and networks, are also planning regional activities – many of which will give priority to addressing the impact of the financial crisis. For more information, see the "Beijing +15 Overview and Regional Activities" document in the Take Action Kit.

**Landmark Dates:** September 4-15, 1995

**Key Related Documents and Links:**

- *Beijing Platform for Action:* <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html>
- *Without Reservation: The Beijing Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights* (available in PDF): <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/without.pdf>
- *Beijing 5-Year Review and Appraisal Website:* <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/beijing+5.htm>
- *Beijing+5 Special Session (CWGL Summary)* <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/beijing5special.html>
- *Holding on to the Promise: Women's Human Rights and the Beijing +5 Review* (available in PDF): <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/holding.html>
- *Beijing 10-Year Review and Appraisal Website:* <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/english/49sess.htm>
- *Beijing+10 (CWGL Summary):* <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/b10/index.html>

**Suggestions for Advocacy:**

- Explore the impact of the current financial crisis on progress towards achieving the recommendations in the *Beijing Platform for Action*
- Review your country's official response to the national Beijing +15 questionnaire and use this as a basis for campaigning and calling attention to gender-related issues, including those that are not addressed adequately in the government response
- Use Beijing +5 and Beijing +10 official documentation to hold governments accountable for commitments they have made to securing human rights for all women, and review "priority areas for future action" sections
- Use Beijing +15 as an opportunity to lobby governments to strengthen Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) at the UN by supporting the creation of and providing resources for a new women's entity within the UN system (see <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/unadvocacy/gea.html> for more information)

**2009-2010 Events:** See CWGL document on Beijing +15 for more information about events at the regional level.

## 10<sup>th</sup> year since UN recognition of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women - November 25<sup>th</sup>: November 2009

**Background:** November 25<sup>th</sup> was declared International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women at the first Feminist Encuentro for Latin America and the Caribbean held in Bogota, Colombia, July 18-21, 1981. This date was chosen to commemorate the violent assassination of the Mirabal sisters on November 25, 1960 by the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. As a result of extensive organizing by women's rights organizations, the United Nations officially recognized November 25<sup>th</sup> as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women in 1999.

**Landmark Date:** November 25, 1999

**Key Related Documents and Links:**

- UN Site: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/violence/>
- General Assembly Resolution: <http://www.undemocracy.com/A-RES-54-134.pdf>

**Significance:** The anti-violence against women movement provides one of the best illustrations of how local activism can translate into global action. This particular example of November 25<sup>th</sup> demonstrates how a local/regional and then global effort eventually was recognized by the United Nations as a vital day for activism on violence against women. CWGL encourages groups to use this anniversary to celebrate the power of women's organizing at the local level and to mark the importance of local-global partnerships in raising awareness about violence against women.

**2009 Events:** Send CWGL information on how you plan to mark November 25<sup>th</sup> this year! Contact: [I6days@cwgl.rutgers.edu](mailto:I6days@cwgl.rutgers.edu)

## 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): December 2009

**Background:** The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* was adopted by the UN in 1979. CEDAW is a legally binding international treaty that identifies what constitutes discrimination against women and commits governments to specific actions to be taken to address all forms of discrimination against women. Signatories to CEDAW have agreed to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women. The Optional Protocol (2000) allows the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women - the body that monitors countries' compliance with the Convention - to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups within its jurisdiction. The Committee can also make general recommendations to states, and two of these recommendations (No. 12 in 1989 and No. 19 in 1992) have specifically addressed violence against women.

**Landmark Date:** December 18, 1979

### **Key Related Documents and Links:**

- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women website (2008-present): <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/>
- CEDAW information for 1979-2007: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>
- CEDAW General Recommendation on Violence Against Women (1992): <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm#recom19>

### **Suggestions for Advocacy:**

- Lobby and campaign for signing and ratification of CEDAW by UN member states that have not yet done so (United States, Iran, Nauru, Palau, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan and Tonga)
- Demand implementation of all elements of the convention by states that have ratified CEDAW

**2009 Events:** The United Nations will hold a commemorative event on December 3, 2009 and will soon be launching a 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary website.

## 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Polytechnique Massacre of Women (The “Montreal Massacre”): December 2009

**Background:** On December 6, 1989, a 25 year-old man named Marc Lepine walked into the University of Montreal's School of Engineering Building with a semi-automatic rifle. He began a shooting spree during which he murdered fourteen women and also injured nine women and four men. Lepine believed it was because of women students that he was not accepted into the engineering school. Before killing himself, he left an explanatory letter which contained a tirade against feminists and a list of nineteen prominent women whom he particularly despised. Women's groups in Canada and around the world organized vigils, marches and memorials.

**Landmark Date:** December 6, 1989

### **Key Related Documents and Links:**

- “After the Montreal Massacre” Film by Gerry Rogers: <http://www.wmm.com/filmCatalog/pages/c173.shtml>

**Significance:** As a result of the massacre, there was an increase in support for educational programs and resources to reduce violence against women in Canada. Both federal and provincial governments made commitments to end violence against women, and the Canadian government proclaimed December 6<sup>th</sup> National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Many organizations and campaigns grew from this tragedy, including gun control campaigns and campaigns that involved men's groups working in solidarity with women seeking an end to violence against women. From the start of the 16 Days Campaign in 1991, December 6<sup>th</sup> was included as one of the landmark dates.

**2009 Events:** Conference to be held in Montreal on December 4-6, 2009 under the auspices of the Institut de recherches et d'études féministes (IREF) of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) [http://www.unil.ch/webdav/site/liege/shared/Appel\\_version\\_anglaise\\_Poly20YearsAfter.pdf](http://www.unil.ch/webdav/site/liege/shared/Appel_version_anglaise_Poly20YearsAfter.pdf)

## 10 Year Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Review Summit: September 2010

**Background:** “In September 2000, building upon a decade of major United Nations conferences and summits, world leaders came together at United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 - that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals.”<sup>2</sup> These goals, which all 191 member states have pledged to meet by 2015, include: Eradicating extreme hunger and poverty; Achieving universal primary education; Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women; Drastically reducing child mortality; Improving maternal health; Combating the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other deadly diseases; Ensuring environmental sustainability; and Establishing a global partnership for development. The initiative for Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) also grew out of the process of the 2005 World Summit, which was the 5-Year Review for the Millennium Declaration and its Millennium Development Goals. To learn more about GEAR, visit <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/unadvocacy/gea.html>.

**Landmark Dates:** September 6-8, 2000 – launch of the Millennium Declaration; September 14-16, 2005 – UN World Summit, 5-year review

### Key Related Documents and Links:

- Millennium Development Goals website: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>
- MDG Monitor: <http://www.mdgmonitor.org/index.cfm>
- UN Non-governmental Liaison Service Resources on the MDGs: <http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/mdg.htm>
- World Summit 2005 Official website: [http://www.un.org/ga/59/hl60\\_plenarymeeting.html](http://www.un.org/ga/59/hl60_plenarymeeting.html)
- World Summit 2005 (CWGL Summary): <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/millsummit/index.html>
- “Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women.” UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality: <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/Gender-frontmatter.pdf>

### Suggestions for Advocacy:

- Ensure indicators on violence against women are used in analyses of progress towards achieving MDG 3 on Gender Equality
- Review progress on and publicize the seven strategic priorities proposed in 2005 by the UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality:
  - Expanding efforts to combat violence against girls and women;
  - Guaranteeing sexual and reproductive health and rights;
  - Guaranteeing women’s and girls’ property, land and inheritance rights;
  - Eliminating gender inequality in employment, such as eliminating the earnings gap;
  - Increasing the number of women in national and local governments;
  - Investing in the infrastructure necessary to reduce women’s and girls’ time burdens, so that, for example, the amount of time women spend on gathering fuel, water, and other basic necessities is drastically reduced; and
  - Expanding girls’ access to education, secondary as well as primary
- Use the 10 Year MDG Review Summit as an opportunity to urge governments to strengthen the UN’s gender equality machinery in order to advance gender equality and women’s human rights at the global and country levels

**2010 Events:** 10 Year MDG Review Summit – Location and Date to be determined

## 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security: October 2010

**Background:** This UN Security Council Resolution marked the first occasion in which the Security Council specifically recognized women’s vital role in conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building. UNSCR 1325 also notes the particular impact of conflict on women, including sexual gender-based violence. The resolution requests that the UN Secretary-General reports on the progress of gender mainstreaming in UN peacekeeping work. In 2008, the UN Security Council also adopted Resolution 1820, which more specifically addresses sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

**Landmark Date:** October 31, 2000

<sup>2</sup><http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>

**Key Related Documents and Links:**

- UNSC Resolution 1325 Full Text (PDF): [http://www.un.org/events/res\\_1325e.pdf](http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf)
- Additional translations of SCR 1325 can be found at <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/1325.html>
- NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security: <http://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/>
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom website: <http://www.peacewomen.org/>
- Global Monitoring Checklist by GAPS: <http://www.gaps-uk.org/>

**Suggestions for Advocacy:**

- Demand that information on UN and government implementation efforts is made easily available, that these efforts are coordinated and strategic, and that their results are tracked (1325 PeaceWomen eNewsletter Issue 108)
- Call on governments to support national and global efforts to ensure women with commitment to implementation of UNSCR 1325 are appointed at highest levels as mediators and to fill leadership roles related to armed conflict
- Urge permanent representatives to the UN to support the creation of an appropriate Security Council mechanism that will monitor implementation of SCR 1325 and SCR 1820 and consider and act on information of the measures taken (or not taken) by parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations regarding women, peace and security under international law (1325 PeaceWomen eNewsletter Issue 109)

**2010 Events:** A calendar of events will be posted on [www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org) as information is gathered.

## 20<sup>th</sup> Year of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign: November/December 2010

**Background:** The 16 Days Campaign was established in 1991 at the first Women's Global Leadership Institute at the Center for Women's Global Leadership. The 23 participants from around the world chose the dates November 25<sup>th</sup> (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) and December 10<sup>th</sup> (International Human Rights Day) to make the symbolic statement that women's rights are human rights and that violence against women is a violation of those rights. A major component of the first 16 Days Campaign in 1991 was the launch of a worldwide petition drive aimed at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights that was held in Vienna in 1993. The 16 Days Campaign became a vehicle for increasing people's awareness of the UN human rights system, and the spread of the petition had the synergistic effect of creating international consciousness about the 16 Days Campaign. In 2010, the campaign will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> year.

**Landmark Date:** November 25 – December 10, 1991

**Key Related Documents and Links:**

- 16 Days Campaign Website: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html>
- *Women, Violence and Human Rights: 1991 Women's Leadership Institute Report* (available in PDF): <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/report91.html>
- *Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights* (available in PDF): <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/publications/demand.html>
- Video: "The Vienna Tribunal: Women's Rights are Human Rights!", to order see <http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c172.shtml>

**Significance:** Since 1991, the 16 Days Campaign has continued to grow, providing activists around the world with opportunities to work together in solidarity and draw upon this period of heightened international attention to gain support for their local efforts. Over the past two decades, over 2,800 organizations in approximately 156 countries have participated in the campaign. As the 16 Days Campaign approaches its 20th anniversary, CWGL will highlight some of the major achievements of women's human rights activism and the anti-violence against women movement.