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**INTERACTIVE EXPERT PANEL**

**Unite to End Violence against Women**

**Engaging men and boys in efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against  
women\***

**Submitted by**

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\* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

I would like to start by thanking the Division for the Advancement of Women for the invitation to speak here today. It is a tremendous honour to have this opportunity to share my thoughts on how best to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality and in ending men's violence against women.

I would also like to thank the many colleagues I work with at Sonke Gender Justice Network and the MenEngage Alliance. Their determined efforts to engage men and boys in ending violence against women and in achieving gender equality inform my comments here today.

Many of my colleagues have themselves been affected by violence—as direct victims of Apartheid era violence or armed conflict in the Great Lakes region or, in some cases, exposed to domestic violence in their homes of origin or forced to witness indescribably cruel sexual violence inflicted against family members during situations of civil war. Borne of anguish and hardship, their determination to work with men to prevent domestic and sexual violence serves as a constant reminder that men too have a stake in creating a world where women and men are able to live free from the threat and trauma of violence. It also strengthens my resolve in the face of pessimistic declarations that men will never change or have nothing to gain from ending patriarchal violence.

## **PAPER OVERVIEW**

My remarks this morning will provide a brief overview of key developments in the area of gender work with men since Beijing and will review lessons learned along the way about how best to support men and boys to take action to prevent domestic and sexual violence. Throughout, I will draw directly on experiences from South Africa, the country I am from and in which I do most of my work.

The Beijing Platform for Action is explicit in its call to involve men and boys in achieving gender equality. Throughout, it urges government and civil society to make concerted efforts to educate, mobilise and engage men and boys. The Platform for Action states unequivocally: “It will be critical for the international community to demonstrate a new commitment to the future - a commitment to inspiring a new generation of women and men to work together for a more just society.”

Despite the inspiring language, we know that we are a long way from achieving a more gender just society. In my country, South Africa, despite impressive new laws and national plans addressing domestic and sexual violence, rates of men's violence against women appear to be on the increase. One in three women report that their first sexual experience was coerced and, in a recent representative sample, a quarter of men reported having raped a woman, and nearly half reported having battered an intimate partner, fifteen percent saying they committed domestic violence in the last year<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Jewkes R, Sikweyiya Y, Morrell R, Dunkle K. Understanding men's health and use of violence: interface of rape and HIV in South Africa. Technical Report. Pretoria: Medical Research Council, 2009.

Men's use of violence against their intimate partners varies in frequency across different societies. A landmark WHO multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women interviewed over 24,000 women from 15 sites in 10 countries. The proportion of ever-partnered women who had ever experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, by an intimate partner in their lifetime was between 15 and 71 per cent<sup>2</sup>.

While men's violence remains all too pervasive, the period since Beijing has included progress towards the goals set of engaging men and boys in addressing gender based violence and in achieving greater gender equality. I will focus on three areas of achievement: the development of policies and declarations calling for efforts to engage men and boys, the strengthening and expansion of civil society work with men and boys, including the development of the global MenEngage Alliance, and the emergence of an evidence base showing that work with men and boys can contribute to positive changes for women and for men.

## **POLICY COMMITMENTS TO INVOLVE MEN AND BOYS**

Following on the heels of the Beijing Platform for Action, many international declarations and commitments have been ratified which call for governments and UN agencies to take concerted action to engage men and boys for gender equality. These include: the 2001 and 2006 UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, the 2004 and 2009 UN CSWs, and the 2009 UNAIDS Action Framework on Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV and the 2009 UNAIDS Operational Plan for Action Framework.

The language of the more recent of these commitments is noteworthy for its recognition of the role men and boys can play in bringing about gender equality and health equity. The 2009 CSW, for instance, recognizes “the capacity of men and boys in bringing about change in attitudes, relationships, and access to resources and decision making which are critical for the promotion of gender equality and the full enjoyment of all human rights by women”, and calls for action to “ensure that men and boys, whose role is critical in achieving gender equality, are actively involved in policies and programmes that aim to involve the equal sharing of responsibilities...”

These international commitments both require policy makers in signatory countries to develop policies and programmes and provide civil society with leverage to demand implementation.

## **CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES**

Alongside policy commitments, across the world, in almost every region and country there are civil society groups working with men and boys—to end violence, promote sexual and reproductive health, encourage greater involvement in parenting, reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS or address the legacy of armed conflict and war.

There are many examples. In Africa, the Rwandan Men's Resource Center fosters new models of non-violent manhood in the wake of their country's devastating genocide. In Sierra Leone, the

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<sup>2</sup> Garcia-Moreno, Claudia, Henrica A.F.M. Jansen, Mary Ellsberg, Lori Heise and Charlotte Watts. 2005 . WHO Multi Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women: Initial Results on Prevalence, Health Outcomes and Women's Responses. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Men's Association for Gender Equality educates men about women's newly gained rights to property, inheritance and divorce. In Kenya, Men for Gender Equality Now uses theater and community mobilization to insist that the criminal justice system holds perpetrators of violence accountable. In South Africa, the Soul City Institute produces carefully researched television series viewed by millions of South Africans that promote changes in men's sexual practices. The organization I represent, Sonke Gender Justice Network, is currently using South Africa's Equality Court to charge the leader of the African National Congress Youth League with hate speech and discrimination after he made comments we believe reinforce rape myths.

In Asia, work is currently taking place in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Thailand, Nepal and Mongolia, to name just a few. Men's Action to Stop Violence Against Women, a grassroots initiative has dozens of chapters across the state of Uttar Pradesh supports women's rights organizations to demand full implementation of India's new Domestic Violence Law. Breakthrough's innovative Push the Button Campaign has inspired large numbers of men and boys to intervene to stop domestic violence. And just last week Sachin Tendulkar and other high profile cricket players from the world's largest sporting league lent their names to the "Coaching Boys into Men" anti-violence campaign developed by the Family Violence Prevention Fund and the International Center for Research on Women.

Impressive work with men is also evident across Latin America: Salud y Genero in Mexico, Puntos de Encuentros in Nicaragua, Instituto Promundo and Papai in Brazil and Cultura y Salud in Chile, amongst many others.

In North America and Europe, hundreds of batterer intervention programmes cooperate with local police and probation departments to achieve victim safety and perpetrator accountability while grassroots organizations like A Call to Men, Men Can Stop Rape and the Swedish Men's Association for Gender Equality conduct public education campaigns to promote relationships based on equality and mutual respect.

Globally, MenEngage, a global alliance of nearly 400 organisations with active networks in at least 30 countries strengthens peer to peer collaboration amongst the many organisations working with men and boys and supports UN agencies to integrate a focus on men and masculinities into their work. Last year alone, MenEngage convened symposia in eight countries attended by hundreds of people from dozens of countries, including a global symposium held in Rio de Janeiro. As co-chair of the MenEngage Alliance, I am privileged to see this work in action. It's done by grassroots activists, usually with limited resources and almost always with passionate determination.

## **AN EMERGING EVIDENCE BASE**

As new programs engaging men and boys have been implemented, a body of effective evidence-based programming has emerged and confirmed that men and boys are willing to change their attitudes and practices and, sometimes, to take a stand for greater gender equality.

A recent review of 57 male involvement programmes published by the World Health Organisation found evidence that at least a quarter were effective in transforming harmful gender

attitudes and behaviour, and many of the others were regarded as promising.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, the Medical Research Council's evaluation of the Stepping Stones intervention implemented in the Eastern Cape showed the latter led to significant changes in men's attitudes and practices including significant reductions in intimate partner violence and other practices that are high risk for HIV transmission.<sup>4,5</sup>

In Brazil, Instituto Promundo's intervention with young men on promoting healthy relationships and HIV/STI prevention, showed significant shifts in gender norms at six months and twelve months. Young men with more equitable norms were between four and eight times less likely to report STI symptoms with additional improvements at 12 months post intervention.<sup>6</sup>

These studies confirm that men can change their gender related attitudes and relations in relatively short periods of time.

## **MOVING BEYOND SMALL SCALE INTERVENTIONS**

The work of civil society organisations is inspiring and the emerging evidence base both compelling and exciting. However, men's violence against women remains pervasive in many parts of the world. Why, if so many initiatives are in place across the world to involve men and boys in achieving gender equality, have we not had greater success? The truth is that much of the work being done is carried out exclusively by civil society organizations and is usually small in scale and limited in impact and sustainability, reaching only a few hundred or thousand men a year.

If work with men is to make a real difference, if it is to slow and halt the domestic and sexual violence still devastating the lives of millions of women in communities across the world, far more needs to be done to engage men and boys as proponents of change.

As we take stock of what has been accomplished since 1995 and consider what still needs to be done, I would like to propose a few ideas for how we might increase the scale, impact and sustainability of gender transformation work with men and boys. These include: using policy approaches to take gender work with men to scale; strengthening civil society capacity to hold governments to their commitments; forging closer working relationships with women's rights organisations and developing shared principles, parameters and priorities.

## **USE POLICY APPROACHES TO TAKE WORK TO SCALE**

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<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization (2007). Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health: Evidence from programme interventions. Geneva

<sup>4</sup> Jewkes R, Wood K, Duvvury N. 'I woke up after I joined Stepping Stones': meanings of a HIV behavioural intervention in rural South African young people's lives. *Social Science & Medicine* (submitted)

<sup>5</sup> Jewkes R, Nduna M, Levin J, Jama N, Dunkle K, Koss M, Puren A, Duvvury N. Impact of Stepping Stones on HIV, HSV-2 and sexual behaviour in rural South Africa: cluster randomised controlled trial. *British Medical Journal* (submitted)

<sup>6</sup> Pulerwitz J, Barker G, Segundo M (2004). "Promoting Healthy Relationships and HIV/STI Prevention for Young Men: Positive Findings from an Intervention Study in Brazil. Horizons Research Update." Washington, DC: Population Council.

To truly transform gender inequalities, it is necessary to go beyond scattered, small-scale interventions and efforts (no matter how effective), towards systematic, large-scale, and coordinated efforts.

Policy can be used in at least three distinct ways. Firstly, policies can require government to scale up successful NGO projects and implement them nationally by, for instance, integrating gender activities into national schools curricula or training staff from government departments to integrate promising practices into their day to day work, including community health workers or social development outreach workers. Secondly, policies can be implemented that change public perceptions of gender roles and practices, such as through the implementation of social welfare laws that encourage men to be more involved in family life and create social services that facilitate women's full participation in the labour force. Thirdly, policies such as gun control and laws aimed at reducing excessive consumption of alcohol can reduce risk factors for violence whilst also delinking notions of manhood from alcohol and gun use.

However, the development of policies is not a guarantee that they will be well implemented or implemented at all. Leadership and support from senior policy-makers and decision-makers (many of whom are men) is vital to generating good outcomes from gender equality policies. Leaders need to model gender-egalitarian practices and publicly endorse gender equality in their workplaces and in their public roles. Examples of actions that demonstrate commitment to gender equality include holding other men accountable for sexist comments and behaviour or for voting against gender-progressive legislation.

## **BUILD CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY TO HOLD GOVERNMENTS TO THEIR COMMITMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS**

By virtue of their status as binding commitments, policies create opportunities for civil society organisations to demand that policy makers comply with their obligations. However, most civil society organisations currently doing work with men have little advocacy experience. If policy approaches are to be used to take gender work with men and boys to scale, it will be necessary to build the capacity of civil society organisations to engage in advocacy aimed at demanding implementation of such policies. Without this, policy efforts are unlikely to achieve much and may, in fact, have the unintended consequence of drawing skilled programme staff into time-consuming but ultimately ineffective policy development efforts.

Men's Action to Stop Violence Against Women (MASVAW) based in India provides a useful example of advocacy to support implementation of hard won policy gains. The 2005 Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act came provides "protection against physical, verbal and sexual abuse and the right to shelter and economic freedom<sup>7</sup>". In collaboration with women's rights organisation, MASVAW coordinates the *Ab To Jaago!* (Wake Up Now!) Campaign which provides rights based education to urban and rural communities about the provisions of the DVA so as to maintain pressure on Government for full implementation<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> The Times of India, *Act is alright, but will it be implemented?* 27 Oct 2006,

<sup>8</sup> <http://dvactupcampaign2007.blogspot.com/2007/12/lucknow.html> accessed on January 20, 2008

Sonke Gender Justice has used a combination of media advocacy and progress reports to draw attention to the gap between policy development and implementation, most recently issuing a scorecard at the 2010 CSW rating South African government department efforts to implement their commitments to involving men and boys. The report is available at [www.genderjustice.org.za](http://www.genderjustice.org.za) and describes significant accomplishments in the area of policy development with inconsistent implementation of commitments and obligations. The report shows, for instance, that few government departments in South Africa currently carry out any activities aimed at involving men and boys in achieving gender equality and reveals that none have costed workplans or coherent strategies to monitor or evaluate their ad-hoc efforts to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality.

## **DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL MODELS THAT GO BEYOND A NARROW FOCUS ON RUNNING WORKSHOPS**

Gender work with men and boys has often taken the form of workshops. This work is important and plays an important role in developing leaders at the community level. However, workshops reach only a small number of men and boys at a time. To be effective, work with men and boys will need to include a broader range of strategies that reach larger numbers of men and also address the many factors shaping gender roles and relations including community education, community mobilisation, media advocacy, policy development and advocacy for the implementation of existing policies.

As policy makers and activists build on the achievements of the last fifteen years, it will be important that they not limit their vision to simply supporting the implementation of workshops but instead develop and roll out multifaceted initiatives that reach large numbers of men with multiple messages.

The United Nations Secretary General's UNITE to End Violence Against Women Campaign provides an excellent example of a campaign that seeks to mobilise millions of men from all walks of life, including high level political leaders, to take action to end men's violence by promoting coordination across all UN agencies.

Campaigns such as Brothers for Life, currently underway in South Africa, also offer useful examples of initiatives that combine mass media with community education and mobilisation to support the implementation of existing policies, in this case South Africa's National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS<sup>9</sup>.

## **DEVELOP CLEAR PRINCIPLES FOR WORK WITH MEN AND BOYS<sup>10</sup>**

As work with men and boys expands across the world, and as governments attempt to take the

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<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, [www.brothersforlife.org](http://www.brothersforlife.org)

<sup>10</sup> This discussion of principles for engaging men and boys draws from Flood, M. Peacock, D. Barker, G. Stern, O. and Greig, A. (2010) "Policy approaches to involving men and boys in achieving gender equality and health equity" prepared by Sonke Gender Justice Network for the Department of Gender Women and Health, World Health Organization.

work to scale, it will be important to establish a set of principles that guide the work and ensure that it remains true to its goal of achieving gender equality and advancing women's rights. Recently in South Africa a number of events were sponsored by government during the 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Campaign which pursued goals inimical to the language of the Beijing Platform for Action. One was titled "Men Take Charge" and the other aimed to "defend men from discrimination". Clear guidelines and principles will decrease the likelihood that valuable resources will be wasted in this way. A WHO policy brief offers the following principles.

**Recognise that men have an investment in change:** Third, policies and programmes should recognise that men also have a stake in changing rigid gender roles and they should support men's efforts to change. There are many reasons why traditional masculine norms are bad for men. Many men are deeply affected by violence perpetrated against the women in their lives -- whether their mothers, sisters, neighbours, co-workers or fellow congregants --- and have a clear investment in stopping the violence. Similarly, the same gender roles that contribute to men's violence against women also encourage men to equate manhood with risk taking and disregard for their own health—manifested in lower life expectancy for men across all regions of the world due to preventable injury and illness.

**Promote women's rights:** Policy approaches to involving men in achieving gender equality should aim to advance women's and men's full access to and enjoyment of their human rights and should intend to bring about gender equality. As such, work with men and boys should encourage men to develop respectful, trusting, and egalitarian relations with women, and with other men.

**Consult women's rights organisations:** Policies and programmes aimed at engaging men and boys in achieving gender equality should be developed and implemented in consultation with groups working to promote and protect women's rights.

**Recognise that men are diverse:** Approaches to engaging men in gender equality work should recognise that men are not homogenous and that their life experiences and access to resources, services and rights is shaped by factors such as class, caste, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, and age.

## CONCLUSION

The fifteen years since Beijing have laid the foundation for the work ahead with men and boys. We now have laws and policies, good programme models and an evidence base showing that work with men and boys can improve women's access to health, rights and dignity whilst simultaneously improving the quality of men's lives. Our task over the coming years is to build on these accomplishments so that we can accomplish the goal set by Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon when he said "Violence against women **cannot be tolerated**, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance, by any political leader or by any government." It is my firm belief that by working together to promote new and egalitarian models of masculinity, we can build families and communities in which women are less vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and violence, more in control of their sexual and reproductive lives, and in which men, women and children enjoy healthier and happier lives.