

**Remarks the opening ceremony for the conference:
“Domestic violence: Strengthening Community Partnerships”**

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Excellencies
Organizers of the conference
Distinguished participants

It is my pleasure to make some remarks at the opening of the conference on “Domestic violence: Strengthening Community Partnerships”. I would like to begin by commending the collaboration on this important topic between the United Nations Division for Economic Support and Coordination and the US Department of Health and Human Services Region 11, Office on Women’s Health; the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence; the Ecuadorian International Center; the International Immigrants Foundation; the NYC Committee on the Status of Women; and the Council on the Status of Latin-American Women. I would also like to acknowledge a number of members of the planning committee, in particular Dr Gilda A. Glasinovich, but also Lalla Khan, Sandra Estepa, Ruth Rodriguez, Martha Zambrano and Martha Laureano. I congratulate you and all your colleagues and partners for this important initiative. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank my colleague, the Director of the Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Mr Sarbuland Khan, for his support to the issue of gender equality, as well as Ms Hanifa Mezoui for all her efforts on this conference.

Let me also say by way of opening, that the work of the United Nations for gender equality has benefited a great deal from the increase in NGO participation in the in recent years. The Division I head, the Division for the Advancement of Women, has been privileged to interact and work closely with many NGOs from around the world, including on the topic of violence against women. NGOs have contributed to the work of the United Nations in many ways. They have brought a rich new perspective into the global dialogue and debate on violence against women; played a key role in supporting, monitoring and implementating international agreements at national level; have contributed to a better understanding and appreciation by a diverse public of the issue; and provided support in very practical ways on the ground.

I know that many of you are carrying out important work on domestic violence at community level. In that context, I would like to share with you some of the work on violence against women, including domestic violence, at global level. There have been many important developments, and some upcoming processes, which can support you in your work. The work done at global, national and community level need to be more closely linked.

The year 2005 marks the ten-year anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. It is also 30 years since the first world conference on women in 1975. 134 Member States and one Observer State provided information to the United Nations on the specific steps they had taken to implement the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action, including the critical area of concern on violence against women. Responses indicate that gender-based violence is increasingly recognized as a form of discrimination against women and a violation of their human rights that requires a comprehensive response from Governments and other stakeholders. Many countries have passed laws and adopted policies to combat all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. Growing attention is also being paid to the links between violence against women and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Violence against women, including domestic violence, remains one of the major challenges in the work on promoting and protecting the human rights of women and promoting gender equality and empowerment of women.

Governments should accelerate their efforts towards comprehensive strategies

systematically and comprehensively monitors action to prevent violence against women, punish perpetrators and provide protection and support for victims. The Committee calls for immediate protection and redress for victims of violence. It encourages States parties to raise public awareness and improve the skills of law enforcement officials, the judiciary, health-

