STATEMENT

Secretary-General's remarks at event on Ending Violence against Women [as prepared for delivery]

Bridgetown, Barbados, 2 July 2015

Today I am proud to stand with you to end the devastating problem of violence against women.

The Caribbean has among the highest rates of sexual assault in the world.

Three Caribbean countries are in the global top ten for recorded rapes.

In the eastern Caribbean, UNICEF estimates that child sexual abuse rates are between 20 and 45 per cent – meaning at least one in five precious children are affected. Most are girls who have no choice but to live close to their attacker.

They desperately need our help.

Too many women are afraid to seek help. One study showed that up to two thirds of all victims suffer without ever reporting the crime.

I am outraged by this. Shame belongs to the perpetrators – not the victims.

We have to change mindsets – especially among men.

I am proud to be the first man to sign onto the UN’s HeForShe campaign. Today, I invite more men to take the HeForShe pledge.

I encourage you to join UNICEF’s End Violence global campaign.

And every day, I count on all of you to work for true equality.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This country can lead the region.

We chose Barbados for the Caribbean launch of my UNiTE to End Violence Against Women Campaign in 2010. Under this campaign, Barbados hosted the 2012 UNiTE Conference that adopted the Bridgetown Declaration for Action to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Abuse Against Girls and Boys.

This country has been reforming its legislation and working to confront the problem.

Today we take another step forward.

The Memorandum of Understanding being signed by the Office of the Attorney General and UN Women will boost our joint efforts to end gender-based violence. It will give women greater access to justice. And it will help end impunity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends,

A great daughter of Barbados, the late Dame Nita Barrow, once told the General Assembly that the United Nations Charter is “a shield against those who would abuse the unsuspecting and the powerless.”

In that light, today’s event is a meaningful celebration of the Charter’s 70th anniversary.

Thank you.
Statements on 2 July 2015

- Bridgetown, Barbados, 2 July 2015 - Secretary-General's opening remarks at the 36th Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community
- New York, 2 July 2015 - Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the attack against United Nations peacekeepers in Mali [Scroll down for French Version]
- Bridgetown, Barbados, 2 July 2015 - Secretary-General's opening remarks at the Caribbean Sustainable Development High-Level Symposium [as prepared for delivery]
- Online, 2 July 2015 - Secretary-General's video message for the online (http://yalaacademy.org/conference) conference: "1 Million Rally for Peace" organized by the 'YaLa Young Leaders Peace Movement'