

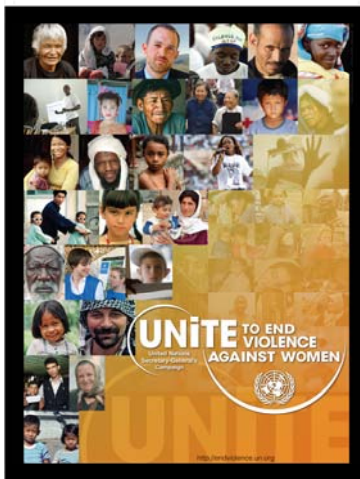


## United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Department of Public Information Jointly Held a Special Event with Documentary Films Screening Session to Mark INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IN ARMENIA

### SUCCESS STORY

***“We must work together to state loud and clear, at the highest level, that violence against women will not be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance.”***

*Message of the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the occasion of the International Women's Day, 8 March 2009*



This year, a special event was jointly organized by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI) to mark the International Women's Day in Armenia that focused on the theme “Women & Men: United to End Violence against Women”. The event was organized within the framework of “UNITE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN” campaign announced by the UN Secretary General. The event was held on March 10 in UN House attracting a large audience of participants representing civil society, government, international community and mass media. It featured presentation of messages of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Obaid on the occasion of March 8, sharing of information on progress in new legal initiative implemented within the framework of UNFPA CGBV project and documentary films screening with discussion.

The event was facilitated by UNFPA CGBV Project Coordinator Ms. Jina Sargizova. The Panel speakers were: President of Association of Armenia Women with University Education (AAWUE) Ms. Jemma Hasratyan, UNDP/PI Officer in Charge Ms. Armine Halajyan, UNFPA Assistant Representative Mr. Garik Hayrapetyan, Head of Family, Women and Children Issues Department of RoA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues Ms. Lala Ghazaryan, and Chief of the Staff Cabinet of the Prosecutor's Office Mr. Ashot Yesayan.



UNFPA Assistant Representative, Mr. Garik Hayrapetyan opened the event by presenting message of Thoraya Obaid, who urged men and boys to use their influence for positive changes and called on government in all countries to enact and enforce laws to bring justice to offenders, and to provide health services and social support to survivors. UNDP/PI Officer in Charge, Ms. Armine Halajyan, presented message of Ban Ki-moon addressed to the governments, international community and civil society that urged to join efforts worldwide to eliminate violence against women. Then, Ms. Lala Ghazaryan talked about Gender Based Violence (GBV) as one of the social issues of concern in Armenia and a crucial importance of effectively addressing it within the framework of the “National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society” implementation. She also stressed the importance of international cooperation contributing to sharing of best practices in the field of combating GBV.



Following the opening of the event, the speakers shared with the audience progress in assessment of the RoA legislation from gender based violence perspective and Reports of the Republic of Armenia to the CEDAW Committee.

Mr. Ashot Yesayan made a detailed presentation on progress in the work of the group of legal experts conducting review and assessment of Armenian legislation from GBV perspective. He concluded his presentation with Q&A session during which participants posted lots of questions indicating a high level of their interest towards this activity implemented within the framework of UNFPA CGBV project in Armenia.

Ms. Hasratyan talked about participation of the Armenian delegation of civil society representatives in the CEDAW Committee session during which the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Periodic Reports of the Republic of Armenia to the CEDAW Committee on the status of the CEDAW implementation was presented. She stressed that the CEDAW Committee took into consideration observations of civil society representatives. These observations were used then in compilation of recommendations to the government of the Republic of Armenia.



The event rounded up with screening of documentaries that were selected from “Women on the Front Line” film series prepared by Dev TV non-profit association of media professionals in collaboration with UN agencies including UNFPA and UNIFEM, donor countries, non-governmental organizations and other partners that provided the information and support for the investigative reports of the mentioned documentaries.



This part of the event was the most intense in terms of emotions that arose as participants watched with strained attention documented cases of violence against women. Comments and remarks of participants proved that issues of violence against women worry also Armenian audience, which after watching documentaries immediately started drawing comparison lines between demonstrated cases and the Armenian reality.

As one of the participants mentioned, “Documentaries are a powerful tool for raising awareness on GBV. They produce a far deeper impact on a conscious level and in this sense, are much stronger than words alone”. In conclusion, the participants stressed the importance of

following the example of documentary film makers and expressed hope that in the future the similar documentaries will be prepared in Armenia to reflect on the issues of GBV in the local context.